

BANDA SINGH BAHADUR **and** **Sikh Sovereignty**

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DEEP & DEEP PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.
F-159, RAJOURI GARDEN, NEW DELHI - 110 027

ISBN 81-7629-300-8

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Printed in India at ELEGANT PRINTERS,
A 38/2, Phase-I, Mayapuri, New Delhi-110 064

Published by DEEP & DEEP PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.,
F-159, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110 027
Phones : 5435369, 5440916

DEDICATED

TO

BABA JATINDER PAL SINGH

(Present Gaddi Nashin, Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur)
who has dedicated his life for the cause of humanity

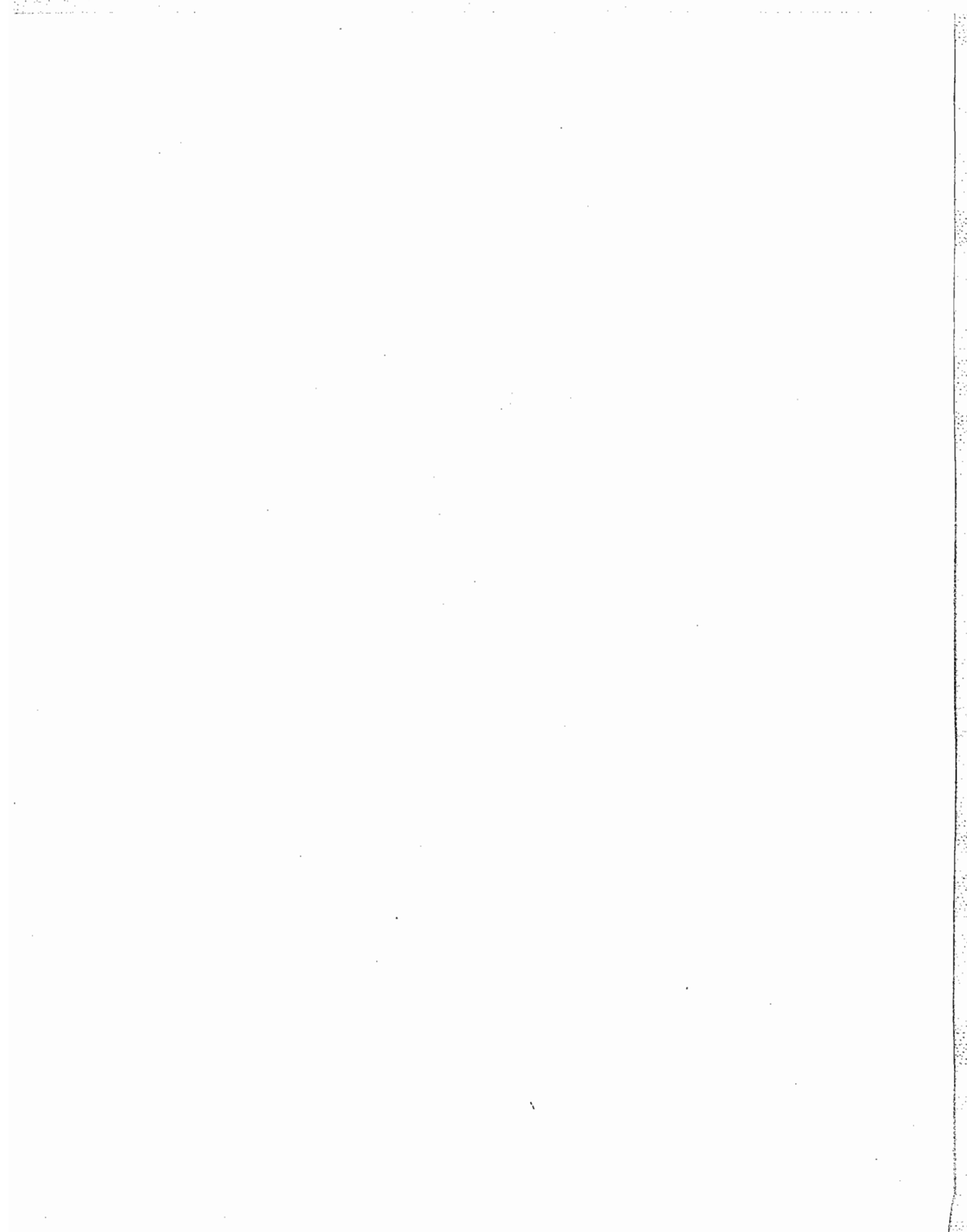
and

My Teacher and Mentor

DR. MOHINDER SINGH

Director Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi

As a token of regard and affection.

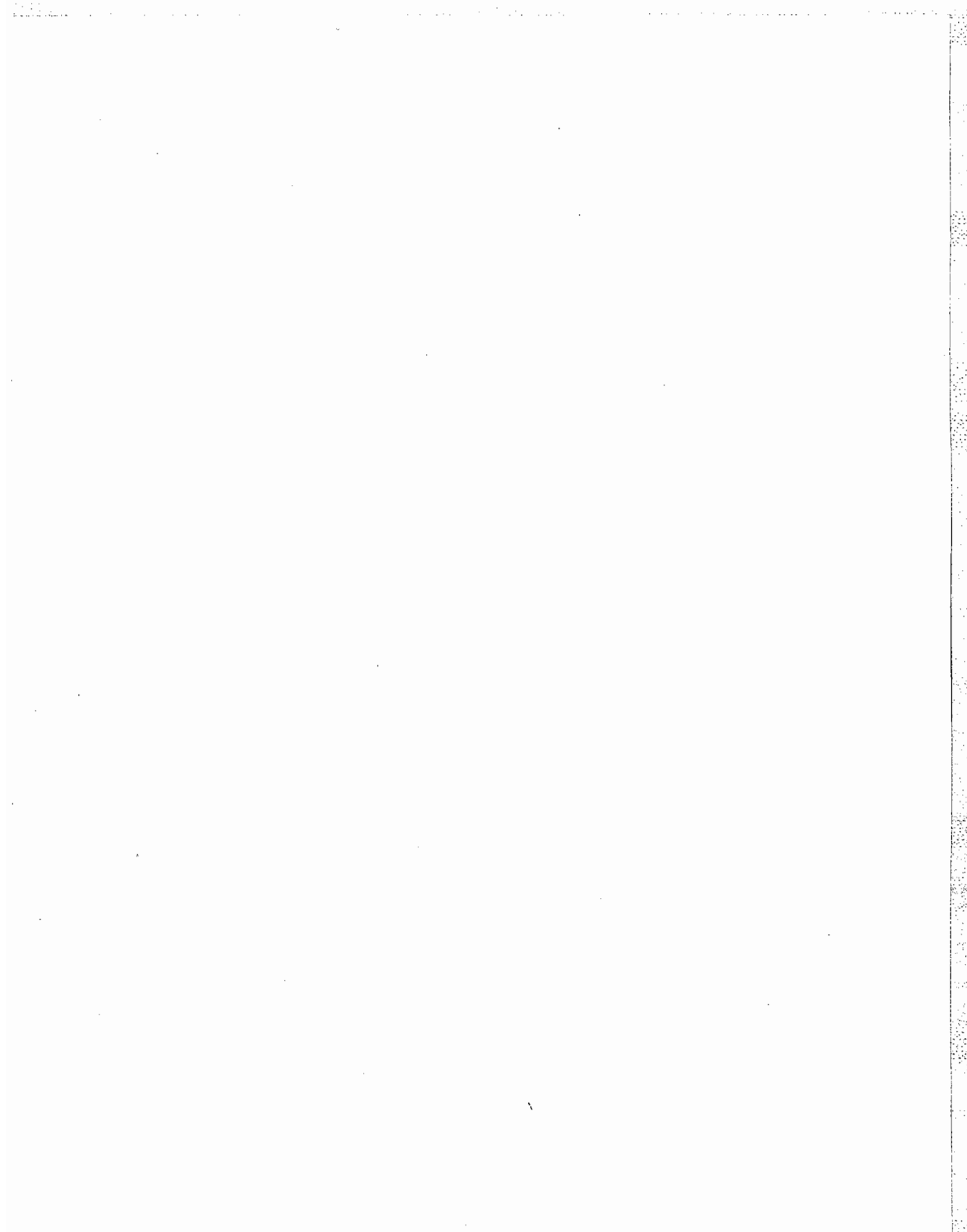


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Foreword

The identity of the Sikhs as a brave community for defending the society from inimical forces has been firmly established by Dr. Harbans Kaur Sagoo, especially by exemplifying the heroic deeds of Banda Singh Bahadur. A rich source material on a small slice of Sikh history has been used by the author to highlight the valour and achievements of Banda Singh Bahadur who battled against the mighty forces of the Mughal tyrants.

To recall, Aurangzeb's demise left a chaotic situation of internecine warfare when Jats, Marathas and Rajputs were all staking their claims of sovereignty and battling for survival against oppression and suppression, panting for air of freedom from domination. At this critical juncture, the emergence of Banda Singh Bahadur heralded a new era by giving a clarion call of unity between all sections of society. Instilling righteousness, Dharma, upholding the dignity of the poor, he mobilised people to sacrifice personal and narrow interests at the altar of freedom. In the face of a serious challenge to the integrity of the nation, he fired the imagination of the masses for achieving a glorious future.

Treating religion as patriotism *par excellence*, it is no wonder that the first Sikh State was launched under his remarkable leadership signifying the triumph of unity for liberation. The author has described this episode in great detail, thereby throwing light on some dark periods of Sikh history.

This book can be of great use to scholars and common citizens curious about Hindu-Sikh relations as they have evolved in recent times. Certain misgivings on this issue giving rise to militancy and terrorism

might get erased from the political psyche of the people who browse through the painstaking efforts of Dr. Sagoo.

While the contemporary relevance of this book cannot be overlooked, the mutual inspiration drawn from Hindu-Sikh scriptures cannot be lost sight of. The Gurbani echoes some of the finest moral homilies and political norms of the Vedantic and Epical theology. For example, Banda Singh Bahadur was imbued with the *Dharma* as preached by Lord Krishna to Arjun in the battlefield of the Mahabharata to take up sword against the enemy.

I see in Dr. Sagoo's publication a heroic character a great value for the youth of our times the spirit of *Rashtra Bhakti* and a lesson to preserve and strengthen national unity and territorial integrity. With India under siege, this book needs to be prescribed for students of history in higher education levels.

I congratulate the author for her timely endeavour.

New Delhi

PROF. M.M. SANKHDHER

Preface

Banda Singh Bahadur continues to be one of those few historical personages who have defied the judgement not only of his contemporaries but also of posterity. An attempt has been made here to study Banda Singh Bahadur's multi-dimensional role in an objective manner and setting at rest to the maximum possible extent the misgivings about him and his career. There can be no question that Banda Singh was a great man, one of the greatest that our land has produced. His life's mission was to protect the oppressed against the oppressor. He fought against injustice and tyranny of the Mughal rulers. He upheld the honour and dignity of the common man. It was he who introduced one of the greatest land reforms in the country by abolishing the zamindari system of the Mughals. After Guru Gobind Singh, it was Banda Singh Bahadur who brought about a radical change in the character of the Sikhs and taught them how to fight and conquer. History has upheld him as a patriot, a brave warrior, a lover of freedom, and a man whose struggle and sacrifices added to the dignity of life and enriched the pages of history. He lived and died like a true hero. The purpose of this study is to give an account of the life and achievements of Banda Singh Bahadur.

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D., the Jats, Marathas, Rajputs and other regional powers staked their claims for sovereignty in their respective domains and played an important role in disintegrating the Mughal empire. During this period of political upheavals, Banda Singh Bahadur was chosen to lead the Sikhs in their struggle against the Mughals by the tenth Guru, Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh taught the Sikhs to take to arms in self-defence or if the cause of justice and righteousness could not be otherwise vindicated. After meeting

Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Singh Bahadur dedicated his life to an ideal without any fear of privation or death. With a single-mindedness of purpose that has few parallels in history, he resolved to carry on the battle of freedom for his countrymen. It was Banda Singh Bahadur who thought of establishing the Sikhs as a political power and in fact he succeeded in establishing the pioneer Sikh state after the conquest of Sarhind in 1710 A.D.

However, Banda Singh Bahadur had to face overwhelming odds to lead the infant Khalsa against the Mughals who were yet too strong for him with inexhaustible temporal resources of the then greatest empire of the world. Whether at Sadaura or at Gurdas Nangal, it was the overwhelming numbers and the extremes of hunger, want of food, fodder and ammunition that turned the table against Banda Singh Bahadur. Mughal General Abdul Samad Khan proved his superiority because of greater resources. Hence this first attempt of its kind by Banda Singh Bahadur was not successful. But it went on to inspire the worshippers of equity and justice to sacrifice themselves at the altar of freedom. Externally, he may not appear to have succeeded in the emancipation of his people, but the fire of independence ignited by Guru Gobind Singh and fanned by Banda Singh was not to be extinguished. It was because of the exploits of Banda Singh Bahadur that a determination was instilled in the ordinary masses of Punjab to resist tyranny and to live and die for a national cause. It was the result of this will that the Hindus and the Sikhs together drove the Afghans and the Mughals in 1763-64 A.D. out of their homeland and thus achieved freedom which they had come to regard as their birthright.

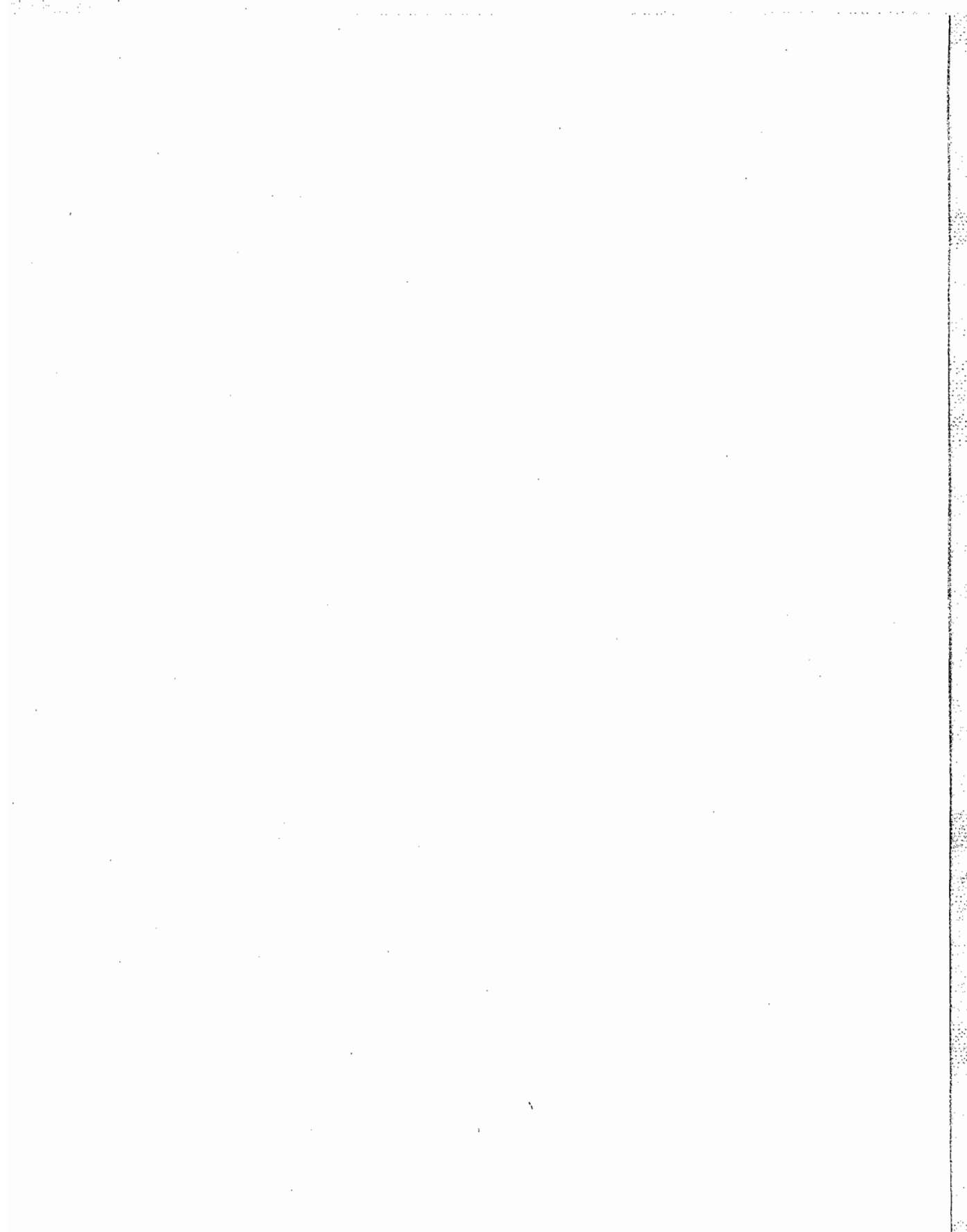
Thus, Banda Singh Bahadur emerges as one of the most outstanding leaders that India produced in the eighteenth century. His courage, patriotism, devotion to a cause, indomitable spirit, fearlessness, sincerity and his earnestness has continued to inspire the future generations. No doubt his name has come to symbolize freedom, dedication and sacrifice.

The author of the present volume has liberally drawn on the researches made on this subject by eminent scholars like William Irvine, Jadunath Sarkar, Ganda Singh, Hari Ram Gupta, Khushwant Singh, Gopal Singh, Sohan Singh Seetal, Muzaffar Alam, Attar Singh, Indubhushan Banerjee, A.C. Banerji, J.D. Cunningham, Chetan Singh, Fauja Singh, Indu Banga, Karam Singh, G.C. Narang, Piara Singh Data, Kahn Singh Nabha, Karam Singh, Mata Joginder Kaur, M.K. Gill, Satbir Singh, Rajpal Singh, Deol G.S., Surinder Singh, and some traditional Punjabi writers such as Rattan Singh Bhangu

Giani, Gian Singh, Santokh Singh, Kesar Singh Chibbar, and Bhai Vir Singh. By making use of all the available and accessible source material, this author has tried to emphasise the historic role of Banda Singh Bahadur for raising the huge armed strength for the establishment of the pioneer Sikh state in Punjab, and as a liberator of the poor masses from the clutches of the tyrants. He had the acumen to plan and the ability to execute. After the tenth Guru, it is Banda Singh Bahadur's name that towers above all other Sikh leaders in the history of the eighteenth century.

The process of transformation of the power structure initiated by Banda Singh Bahadur could not be completed during his life time. But the sustained efforts of this champion of the oppressed and suppressed masses kept on lingering in their memory and they naturally wished well of the Sikh movement. This was the major contribution of Banda Singh Bahadur to the Sikh movement that the peasants, even amidst the most terrible dangers, gave shelter and provided food to the *Khalsa*, in their struggle against the Mughals and the Afghans. In fact, Banda Singh Bahadur was a man of the masses whom they obeyed ungrudgingly and blindly. When he asked his followers to lay down arms, not one disobeyed him and piled up their arms before him, and doors were opened to the enemy to face sure death. He not only led the Sikh movement against the Mughals but broadbased it among masses to fight against tyranny and suppression. He broke the myth of Mughal invincibility. He wanted to prepare his supporters to fight for freedom—both political and economic. He wanted to infuse the spirit of self-confidence and sense of honour and dignity. He was neither a religious Guru of the Sikhs nor pretended to be one. He was appointed their temporal leader, designated as *Bakshi* of the *Khalsa* by the tenth Guru and he accepted it smilingly.

HARBANS KAUR SAGOO



Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to the authors and publishers from whose publications she has extracted material to support or to critically analyse the arguments put forward in the work. Due acknowledgements have been made in the body of the book for the same. I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my special sense of gratitude to late Dr. Ganda Singh, without whose writings and pioneering work on Banda Singh Bahadur, this work would not have been possible.

The author had the privilege of receiving help from a wide circle of friends and critics. She acknowledges with gratitude the affection and encouragement received from them all. I express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Mohinder Singh, Director, Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, for his help and guidance in the preparation of this work. He went through the entire manuscript and gave many valuable suggestions for improvement. I would also like to place on record my gratitude to my old teacher Dr. H.S. Chawla of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, University of Delhi, and Mr. J.C. Dua of the Dyal Singh College (Evening), University of Delhi, for their cooperation and encouragement to complete the work. The keen and loving interest taken by my friend Dr. Tajinder Pal Kaur, seniormost reader in the Hindi Department of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa Post-Graduate (Evening) College, University of Delhi, in my research work. She has been ever ready to lend me a helping hand. My thanks are due to Principal Harmeet Singh of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa Post-Graduate (Evening) College, University of Delhi, for his cooperation and inspiration to complete the work. I have also to acknowledge the encouragement I have received from Dr. Jaspal Singh, Indian High Commissioner to Mozambique and Swaziland, whose sound and sincere advice has greatly helped me in this endeavour.

I shall be failing in my duty if I omit to acknowledge the ready assistance given to me by my friend and librarian, S. Wariam Singh of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, University of Delhi, during my research on the subject. I express my great appreciation for the help which Mr. Anand, Librarian of the Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, has extended to me in several ways. I am also very thankful to Mr. Ravinder Singh, Gurmeet Singh and Mr. Kamaljit Singh of the S.G.T.B. Khalsa Post-Graduate (Evening) College Library, for their substantial assistance and kind cooperation.

I am also grateful to the staff and manager, Golden Temple, Amritsar, for giving me all facilities during my stay in Guru Hargobind Niwas, while collecting the data for this book.

My grateful acknowledgement is due to my young colleague Mrs. Shobhika Mukal of the History Department, for helping me in several ways. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Principal of the Mata Sundari College, University of Delhi, Dr. Mohinder Kaur Gill. She proved to be an encyclopedia on traditional sources of Sikh history.

I gratefully acknowledge the work and active help and cooperation of my husband Mr. J.S. Sagoo, in connection with the preparation of this book. Without his support, my best efforts would have been futile. I apologize to my daughter Harleen for unforgivably neglecting so many of her simple demands during the period of my study. Words fail me in recounting what I owe to my brother S. Sohan Singh, and Baba Jatinder Pal Singh, the present Gaddi Nashin of Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, for his valuable information and guidance about the sect and places related to Banda Singh Bahadur.

In this book the rare photographs are taken by our friend and professional photographer Mr. Onkar Singh Palaha of Mumbai, who travelled extensively with us to do the job, which only an artist of his calibre could have done. I must record my sense of obligation to him.

Above all, I am grateful to Professor M.M. Sankhdher for having accepted my request to write a Foreword.

Finally, I bow my head to the Almighty God with whose blessings I have been able to accomplish this humble piece of research in the Sikh history.

Sikh Gurus and Mughal Emperors

In order that we may fully appreciate the magnitude of the task which Banda Singh Bahadur undertook to perform and in order to fully comprehend his achievements, it is essential to make a brief survey of the Mughal-Sikh relations from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh (1469 A.D. to 1708 A.D.). Punjab was always one of the most important parts of the Mughal empire. Since this period of the history of Punjab is mainly concerned with the development of Sikh religion and the lives and works of the Sikh Gurus, it would be interesting to note that Sikh history started with the start of the Mughal period. Punjab became a source of strength to the Mughals and to the Sikhs a source of life. We shall see how, when the one failed to provide justice and peace to the country, the other watched and ultimately rose to destroy the evil and reassert its independence.

RELATIONS UNDER GURU NANAK (1469 A.D.—1539 A.D.)

The period of Sikh Gurus and the Mughal rulers coincided. One was a religious movement and the other political. The Mughals entered this country and brought about destruction and religious persecution. The Sikh Gurus resisted them and preached the message of peace. So one day a clash between the two was certain. Guru Nanak was a contemporary

of Babur, and Guru Gobind Singh of Aurangzeb, the last Mughal Emperor. Just as the Mughal power in India and Punjab continued to weaken after the death of Aurangzeb, Sikh power continued to develop and acquire strength, till, ultimately, the former was destroyed and the latter established itself.

Guru Gobind Singh writes in *Bichitra Natak*, that from one side came Babur and from the other side came Guru Nanak. The clash was inevitable, as the Almighty Himself had desired it.¹ In the cold winter of 1520-21, Guru Nanak was returning home from Baghdad through Khurasan and Afghanistan. He noticed tremendous excitement throughout these countries. On a call from Babur to invade India, youngmen were thronging in Kabul with horses and arms. Guru Nanak followed the traditional route via Herat, Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul, Jalalabad, Khyber Pass, Peshawar, Attock and Hasan Abdal. Passing through Jhelum, Gujrat and Wazirabad, Guru Nanak halted at Sayyidpur, 56 kms north-west of Lahore. He put up with his old disciple, Bhai Lalo, who detained Guru Nanak for a sufficiently long time. Lalo complained to him about the oppression of the Lodi Kings, their officials, and the Pathans in general. The Guru replied that their dominion would end soon as Babur was on his way to invade India. The Guru said:

As the word of the Lord comes
to me, so do I utter, O Lalo.
Bringing the marriage party of sin,
Babur has hastened from Kabul and demands
Perforce the gifts of wealth, etc. O Lalo.²

Guru Nanak was still at Sayyidpur when Babur entered Punjab. The Trans-Indus territory and the Sind Sagar Doab were already under him. He now seized Gujrat and Sialkot situated in the Chaj and Rachna Doabs, respectively, and appeared at Sayyidpur on his way to Lahore.³ The town was mostly inhabited by Hindu traders and zamindars. They offered considerable resistance in order to save their lives, honour and property. This infuriated Babur. He ordered a general massacre of the people. All the young women were reduced to slavery. The older ones were forced to grind corn and cook food for the troops. The town was looted and then destroyed by fire.⁴ According to the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak was also arrested at Sayyidpur. Guru Nanak and Lalo were forced to carry heavy loads of looted property on their heads to the camp and then to grind corn.⁵ But when Babur was informed of the Guru's saintly character,⁶ he saw him personally and begged his pardon. Babur was

very much impressed as a result of a conversation with the Guru. He ordered the Guru's release. But the Guru refused unless others were also released along with him. Thereupon Babur ordered all the prisoners to be set free.⁷ However, this is not confirmed by contemporary Mughal records. There is a possibility that the Guru, who was greatly moved by the horrors and destruction brought about by the invader, should have personally interviewed him, though the incident might have been passed over by the Mughals as insignificant.⁸

Babur's entry into India was not hailed by Guru Nanak. He, in his hymns, rather painted a very pathetic picture of Babur's atrocities in Punjab in general and at Sayyidpur (Eminabad) in particular. He also condemned the Lodi Sultan for not offering a strong and united resistance to Babur and in one of his hymns he says: "No one would remember the name of Lodi dogs." The barbarous treatment of prisoners in the camp, particularly of women, broke the tender heart of Nanak. The shock and pain were too acute for him to bear. In his four hymns collectively called "Babur Vani" he says:

God has protected Khurasan and brought terror to Hindustan.
The creator takes not the blame on Himself
and has sent the Mughals as Death's myrmidon.
So much beating was inflicted that people shrieked.
Didst Thou, O God, feel no compassion?
Thou, O Maker, art the equal Master of all.
If a mighty man smites another mighty man,
then the mind feels not anger.
If a powerful tiger falling on a herd, kills it,
then its Master should show manliness.
The dogs have spoiled and laid waste the priceless country
No one pays heed to the dead
O Lord, Thou Thyself joinest and Thyself separatest.
Lo! This is thine greatness!⁹

The pitiable condition of captive women is described by Guru Nanak thus :

The tresses that adorned these lovely heads,
And were parted with vermilion,
Have been shorn with cruel shears,
Dust has been thrown on their shaven heads.
They lived in ease in palaces

Now they must beg by the roadside,
Having no place for their shelter.

... ..
When those whose heads are shorn were married
Fair indeed seemed their bridegrooms beside them.
They were brought home in palanquins carved with ivory.
Pitchers of water were waved over their heads
In ceremonial welcome,
Ornate fans glittered waving above them.
At the first entry into the new home
Each bride was offered a gift of a lakh of rupees,
Another lakh when each stood up to take her post in her new
home,
Coconut shredding and raisins were among the delicious
fruits served to them at their tables.
These beauties lent charm to the couches they reclined on.
Now they are dragged away with ropes round their necks;
Their necklaces are snapped and their greatest enemies now.
Barbarous soldiers have taken them prisoners and disgraced them.
... ..
Few, some very few,
From this havoc returned home,
And others enquire of them
About their lost dear ones,
Many are lost for ever,
And weeping and anguish are the lot of those who survive.¹⁰

Babur's soldiers made no distinction between Hindus and Muslims while outraging their modesty. Rape was committed indiscriminately. The women who suffered were Hindustani, Turkani, Bhatiani and Thakurani. Guru Nanak says about them in *Adi Granth*.

There were the women of Hindus, Muslims, Bhattis and Rajputs
The robes of some were torn from head to foot and
some had their dwellings in the cremation ground
How did they, whose handsome husbands
came not home, pass their nights?¹¹

It was this open condemnation of the prevailing political debauchery which distinguished Guru Nanak from the other *Bhakti* reformers. Guru Nanak was the first Indian reformer who started a war of thoughts against tyrannical rulers and prepared the way for the future clashes

between the Mughals and the Sikhs. He imparted political consciousness to his followers. It meant the Sikhs would not sit quietly like the recluse and saints closing their eyes towards what was happening around them. They would rather challenge the evil and sacrifice their lives as Guru Arjun, Guru Teg Bahadur, Bhai Mati Das and thousands others did to eradicate it. Such utterances of the Guru added a political element to the Sikh character which developed slowly but surely into a separate realm of their own, however unconscious of it the Sikh Gurus themselves might have been. In fact, says Dr. G.C. Narang: "After centuries of subjection, Nanak was the first among the Hindus to raise his voice against tyranny and oppression."¹² Later it developed into a clash between the Mughals and Guru Hargobind, and thereafter between Mughals and Guru Gobind Singh which changed the Sikhs into Singhs, a nation of lions, the *Khalsa*.

Guru Nanak was a strong opponent of imperialism: political, religious, social and economic. He openly challenged the Lodi rulers and condemned the invasion of Babur. While condemning the destruction brought about by Babur, he did not hesitate in censuring even the Almighty who considered Khurasan as his own but sent Mughals, the messengers of death, to India. So much destruction was wrought, but he did not feel pity.¹³ Guru Nanak was a great statesman indeed. He saw the world suffering under imperialism of different types and full of evil. Instead of renouncing the world and going over to jungles, he challenged the imperialists and denounced them most harshly. So, in fact, Guru Nanak did lay the foundations of a revolution which was completed by the time of Guru Gobind Singh. It is asserted, for instance, that he thought of the political disabilities of his people.¹⁴ It is also said that he was the first medieval Indian saint to condemn war and to denounce exploitation.¹⁵ "Who knows that given the means which Guru Gobind Singh has at his disposal with the work of ten generations which has prepared the ground for him, Nanak would have met the situation in the same way in which the former did in his own time afterwards."¹⁶ G.C. Narang also believes that the "steel" for the "sword" of Guru Gobind Singh was provided by Guru Nanak.¹⁷ Indubhushan Banerjee is of the same view when he says that the future Sikh "Nation" grew from the foundations provided by Guru Nanak.¹⁸ For another writer, there is no question of "transformation" of Sikhism from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. The difference between them is only a "difference of accent."¹⁹ It is suggested by some other scholars that the apt phrase to use is "transfiguration" for there was "no break, no digression in the programme of Sikh life".²⁰ The order of the *Khalsa*, far from being a

contingent phenomenon dictated by the exigencies of the moment, appears to be "a logical development and entelechy of the teachings of Guru Nanak."²¹ So it is clear that Guru Nanak did lay the foundation of a revolution which was completed by the time of Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Nanak, perceiving the true principles of reforms, struck at the root of all social and religious disabilities which had crippled the Hindu society. He felt the need, and laid the foundation, of a new national consciousness that might enable his followers, not only to stand erect and united against oppressors, but also to be the instrument of uprooting political tyranny. This was a task not to be achieved in a life-time or two. Hence, it was that he deliberately decided upon the system of succession of Gurus till the work of nation-building was complete with the true instincts of a gifted reformer, he diagnosed the malady and proceeded with the necessary treatment in a calm, scientific way. He realized that much as he resented the oppression of the rulers and the political bondage of the people, he could not, all at once, prepare the latter to march into the battlefield against their political oppressors. He felt that before the wider liberation could be attempted, the masses had to be emancipated from the social and religious oppression of their coreligionists. As long as they were content to bear one sort of slavery, they could not rise to throw off another, which was still more galling and far more degrading. About the political concerns of Guru Nanak Dr. Gokul Chand Narang wrote thus: "that the Guru felt keenly the barbarous inhumanities perpetuated by the then Mohammadan rulers is evident from some of his poems or *Shabads* wherein he depicts the ghastly scenes being daily enacted before him. His heart melted in agony at the cruel spectacle, but, just then, he could do nothing towards ameliorating the condition of the Hindus by either of the two methods of political work, 'Constitutional agitation would have failed because there was no constitution in India. Active resistance of the ruling despotism was out of question because the Hindus were too weak to make any effective resistance.'" Even S.M. Latif, an ardent advocate of the idea that Guru Nanak had no political ideals, says that once Guru Nanak was arrested and imprisoned under the Emperor's order, on the charge that he was preaching doctrines which might prove dangerous to the state. Dr. Gokul Chand Narang further says that Guru Nanak contended himself, for the time, with planting the germs of his contemplated Sikh nation in the minds and hearts of the people. The work of his nine successors was in strict conformity with his ideals and consisted in gradually giving a "local habitation and a name". "To the ideals of Guru Nanak . . . Gobind himself, in fact, as well as his work, was the natural

product of the process of evolution that had been going on ever since the foundation of Sikhism. The harvest which ripened in the time of Guru Gobind Singh had been sown by Nanak and watered by his successors." Guru Nanak never advocated the life of pure *Bhakti*, unconcerned with the political conditions of the country on which the life of the common man depended. If a ruler resorted to tyranny, it was the duty of a religious man to fight against it. Guru Nanak, when arrested and brought to the presence of Babur by Mir Khan, called Babur a "tyrant" on his face, and asked him to stop destruction and senseless killing of the people.

GURU ANGAD DEV (1539 A.D.—1552 A.D.)

After Guru Nanak, Guru Angad succeeded to the pontificate, and after Babur, Humayun came to power. The work of elevation and liberation started by Guru Nanak was continued by Guru Angad. He collected and reduced to writing the hymns, as well as account of the life and travels of Guru Nanak, and took the initial steps towards the organization of the budding nation. Guru Angad gave Sikhs an individuality of their own. The Institution of *langar* (free kitchen) started by Guru Nanak and popularised by Guru Angad, was a distinctive feature of the Sikh sect. It developed the spirit of equality and brotherhood amongst the people, and gave a crushing blow to the caste system and the social hierarchy based on birth. In other words, this was the first step that encouraged people to sit together, dine together and consider themselves members of one family. As a matter of fact, the institution of *langar* was the first step towards developing a society on political lines, as people learnt to assemble at a fixed place as members of one family, regardless of race, wealth, sex, caste, occupation or religion.²²

The Sikh tradition says that after his defeat by Sher Shah on May 17, 1540 A.D. at Kanauj, Humayun made his way to Lahore and learnt of the way of some "wonder working priest"²³ who could restore to him his kingdom. He was informed by one of his associates of the greatness of the late Guru Nanak and of the succession of Guru Angad to his spiritual sovereignty, and was advised to seek his assistance. Upon this, Humayun, taking offerings with him, proceeded to Khandur in Amritsar district. Guru Angad was in a deep trance, and Humayun was kept waiting for some time. The Mughal Emperor, thereupon, lost his temper

and put his hand on the hilt of his sword with the intention of striking the Guru. The Guru undaunted by this behaviour addressed him fearlessly like Guru Nanak, who addressed Babur as tyrant on his face: When you ought to have used your sword against Sher Shah, you proved to be a coward and fled the battlefield, and now posing as a hero, you wish to attack a body of men engaged in their devotion.²⁴ On hearing the Guru's admonition Humayun felt ashamed, begged his forgiveness and received his blessings²⁵ and thereafter took leave from the Guru, crossed the Indus with great difficulty, and made his way to Iran.²⁶ The Guru might have resented Humayun's attitude towards him, but he bore no ill-will against the Emperor. The Guru was an embodiment of forgiveness. He attached no importance to this incident and ignored it altogether.²⁷

GURU AMAR DAS (1552 A.D.—1574 A.D.)

About four years after Guru Amar Das succeeded to the pontificate, Akbar came to power as the Emperor of India. Akbar possessed the spirit of religious toleration and so long as he ruled India, the relations between the Mughals and the Sikh Gurus remained very cordial and friendly. Emperor Akbar was different from his predecessors and ancestors. He respected saints of all religions and paid them homage while touring through his Empire. He held the Sikh Gurus in great reverence. After suppressing the rebellion of Bairam Khan in 1560 A.D., Akbar, on his way to Lahore, visited Guru Amar Das at Goindwal and was greatly impressed to see the working of the Guru's free kitchen (*langar*). He also sat on the floor in the *Pangat* and took his meal. The Sikhs, both men and women, working in the kitchen had so deeply impressed Akbar with their humility, spirit of service, feeling of reverence for the Guru as well as for the Emperor, and devotion to God that he offered a few revenue-free villages for the support of the *langar*. The Guru respectfully declined saying that the *langar* depended solely on the offerings of the Sikhs. Akbar could not go without making a present. On hearing that the Guru's son-in-law, Jetha, the future Guru Ram Das, was in search of some land in the heart of Majha, the Emperor granted a tract of land not far from Chubbal to Bibi Bhani. The Guru could not refuse a gift to the girl. A.C. Banerji writes that a visit by Akbar to Guru Amar Das in Goindwal was a friendly tribute to the Guru's saintly character.²⁸ Santokh Singh writes:

Patā pargane kā likh dīn,
 Rahen grām sab Guru adhīn
 Ād Jhabāl bir jeh karyo,
 Bohte grām arap mard bharyo²⁹

Baba Budha is said to have been appointed by the Guru to manage the property. There is no doubt that Akbar's visit to Goindwal greatly increased the Guru's prestige and popularity and resulted in adding a large number of new followers to Sikhism.

At this time Akbar, along with his large escort, camped at Lahore for a long time. As a result, the prices of essential in that city and in the adjoining areas rose. When the next harvest was ready, Akbar prepared to march off, leaving behind a strong possibility of sudden fall in the prices to ruin the peasants. The Guru is said to have sent a request to Akbar who in response to it remitted the entire land tax for the year.³⁰

GURU RAM DAS (1574 A.D.—1581 A.D.)

To know the Sikh-Mughal relations under Guru Ram Das, we should go back to the social reforms of Guru Amar Das. Guru Amar Das initiated a number of social reforms. He denounced the practice of *Sati*³¹ and openly asked his followers to re-marry the widows. According to him, opportunities should be created for widow remarriage so that the widowed women were able to lead a normal, socially respectable life and should not fall victim to temptation.³² Guru Amar Das settled down at Goindwal to guide the destiny of the Sikhs. By constructing a *baoli* (large well), by reforming the institution of free and common kitchen, by dividing his spiritual empire into twenty-two provinces (*manjis*) by introducing new ceremonies for birth and death, he contributed a lot towards the cultural and social evolution of his followers.

As an instance of the social evolution brought about by Guru Amar Das, it may be noted that when he constructed a *baoli* at Goindwal, he preached among his disciples that they could wash away all their sins by having a dip there, and thus the Sikhs were discouraged from going to the Hindu places of pilgrimage. The foundation of this *baoli* marked a highly significant step in the history of Sikhism, as Goindwal developed into a very important place of worship, which prompted the Sikhs to abandon the practice of going far away from Punjab to have a holy dip at Haridwar, Prayag, Varanasi, Cuttack or Puri, especially as most of the

people could not afford to go to these distant places. It also led to the Sikhs being disassociated from the old and extravagant customs of the Hindus prevalent in those places. The Guru reformed the *langar* already in vogue and initiated by his predecessors. The *langar* was intended to feed those who were unable to work and also those who came to the Guru from distant places in connection with the worship. This institution helped in removing untouchability which was a great curse within the Hindu society. "*Langar* proved a powerful aid in the propaganda work. Besides serving as an asylum for the poor, it also became a great instrument for advertisement and popularity and it gave a definite direction to the charities of the Guru's followers."³³

The Guru divided his spiritual empire into twenty-two *manjis* (seats). The number of Sikhs had greatly increased and it was very difficult for the Guru to deliver instructions in person to all his disciples. This system (*manjis*) went a long way in strengthening the foundations of the Sikh religious order. He also introduced new ceremonies for birth and death, and asked his disciples to perform these ceremonies differently from those of the Hindus, which were very orthodox and uneconomical. He decried the practice of calling Hindu priests for the performance of death and marriage ceremonies, which now became very simple and inexpensive. He popularised Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script, since the Guru thought it would be better to present his message in the language of the people. The Brahmins delivered their instructions in Sanskrit, which they deemed the language of the gods, but it was not commonly understood by the people. On this account, all the Sikh Gurus had composed their hymns in the language of the people, and enshrined them in the Gurmukhi characters so that men and women of all castes and creeds read and understood them. He made efforts to discourage the practice of female infanticide prevalent in many backward classes. The Guru considered female infanticide a curse. He enjoined upon his disciples that they should give equal affection to male and female children. He vehemently denounced *purda* and prohibited drinking alcohol.

The preaching of the Sikh view by Guru Amar Das had upset the orthodox because the tenets of the Sikh creed were in total opposition to the orthodox Hindu practice. These tenets were entirely unacceptable to the Brahmins. There was no scope for the caste system, ritualistic practices and repetition of *Mantras* in the Sikh philosophy as expounded by the Gurus. The Brahmins realised that in spite of their opposition, the

Sikh organisation was becoming more powerful, and the Sikh religion was acquiring a distinct identity.

The city of Goindwal had been founded by a man named Gonda Marwaha who was a staunch follower of the Guru and at whose invitation the Guru had settled down at that place. After Gonda's death, the opponents of the Guru, *Brahmins, Jogis, Sadhus* and *Sheikhs*, etc., incited the son of Gonda, Marwaha Khatri,³⁴ who was a village headman. The enemies of the Guru told him³⁵ that he was the actual owner of the land on which the town of Goindwal had sprung up. The Guru had occupied the land illegally. So he should evict the Guru. Under the influence of these enemies of the Guru, Marwaha Khatri started creating difficulties for the Guru and his Sikhs,³⁶ the mischievous boys of the town started throwing stones at the pitchers of the Sikhs as they went to fetch water. The Guru, however, told his Sikhs to remain peaceful under all provocations.³⁷

Marwaha Khatri hit upon a plan to harass the Guru. He demanded that the Guru should give him a part of the offerings made by his disciples as an acknowledgement of his overlordship as he was the real owner of the land, otherwise he should quit the town. The Guru told him that he had not usurped land belonging to him and he was not prepared to accept any interference in the way of life as laid by the Gurus. If he needed food and ration for himself and his friends he could get these from the *langar* but the Guru was not ready to pay even a single penny from the offerings of Sikhs to acknowledge his overlordship.³⁸

Marwaha Khatri made a complaint against the Guru at Lahore. He stated that a *fakir* had been allowed to settle on his land but he had taken illegal possession of his lands. He pleaded that the case should be investigated and the Guru evicted. Nawab Jaffar Beg came to Goindwal. He saw for himself that the Guru was a devotee of God and always absorbed himself in meditation. He was opposed to none and free meals were served at the *langar* to one and all, without any discrimination. He dismissed the complaint made by Gonda and left for Lahore.³⁹

After giving a crushing defeat to the Afghan forces, Akbar was camping at Lahore. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the opponents of Guru Amar Das approached Akbar and complained that there was a *faqir* at Goindwal who had founded a new religion⁴⁰ by completely violating the customs and practices laid down in Hindu *Shastras* and *Smritis*. *Mahma Prakash* gives a description of this incident: The *Brahmins*,

*Khatri*s and *Muslims* went together to the king to make a complaint. Emperor Akbar had risen to power. They said that the traditions and institutions of four *varnas* disappears from the world. He does not repeat the *Gayatri Mantra*. He asks the people to meditate on *Waheguru*. This has never happened in all the four *yugas*. Rejecting *srutis* and *smritis* he has set up his own cult.⁴¹ The *Brahmins* called Akbar the protector of the traditions and prayed to him to save the Hindu religion from being destroyed. On hearing the complaint of the Hindus of Goindwal he called a messenger and sent a letter to Guru Amar Das at Goindwal. In this letter he had requested the Guru to pay a visit to Lahore.

Guru Amar Das examined the letter from Akbar. He called Bhai Jetha (Guru Ram Das) and asked him to go to Lahore to talk to Akbar regarding the complaint made by their detractors and to acquaint the Emperor with the Sikh way of life. Bhai Jetha left for Lahore. From the fact that Jetha was sent to Lahore to represent Guru Amar Das, it became very clear that the Guru was sure that Bhai Jetha would be able to present the correct picture of the Sikh way of life to Akbar. It also indicated that the Guru had made up his mind to appoint Bhai Jetha his successor otherwise he would have not sent him on such a delicate mission of great importance. Before Jetha departed, he instructed him that there was no need to fear Akbar and that he must talk to Akbar with courage and answer his questions accurately and with integrity.⁴²

Bhai Jetha reached Lahore and stayed at his birth place, Chuna Mandi. Akbar asked both the parties to present their case the next day. Apart from the high officials of Akbar, the *Brahmins* who had complained against the Guru were present in the court. Gonda's son (Marwaha Khatri) was the leader of this group. A list of all the complaints and objections raised by the detractors of the Guru was read out to Bhai Jetha.

The main objections were that Guru Amar Das and before him Guru Angad Dev and Guru Nanak Dev had set up a new religion which violated the customs and traditions sanctified by the *shastras*. The Guru did not believe in casteism and was trying to create a community by uniting all the four castes. Bhai Jetha replied to these objections with such maturity and clarity that the courtiers were wonderstruck. He said that "In *kaliyug* meditating on the Name of God and praise of the Almighty through the singing of *Gurbani* is our worship. The discourses of the Guru and his instructions are just like *shastras* for us. Regarding the caste system, our position is that God has made man equal. A man

does not become high or low for the simple reason that he has been born in an exalted or a low family. That man alone is worthy of esteem whose actions are good and whose life is full of truth and love of mankind and who loves God and worships him and fears him. Sikhism does not believe in the caste system." Bhai Jetha also explained the Guru's point of view regarding idol worship and pilgrimage to holy places. He said: "The presence of God can be felt everywhere. The Sikhs do not believe in the worship of idols. We are of the view that the mind of man is as holy as Kashi and sixty-eight other places of pilgrimage. We can understand our mind with the help of meditation on the True Name and through understanding the essence of the *shabad*."⁴³

It is said that Akbar was so much impressed with the arguments of Bhai Jetha that he declared that the detractors of Guru Amar Das were only liars and turned them out of his court. Dr. A.C. Banerji has written that Akbar felt that there was nothing in the teaching of the Sikh Gurus which might be considered to be in opposition to the Hindu religion.⁴⁴ Bhai Jetha won a historic victory for the spread of the Sikh religion. It evoked respect in the mind of Akbar for the Sikh way of life, and created in him the desire to pay homage to Guru Amar Das and actually visited Goindwal in 1560 A.D., (as already discussed under Guru Amar Das). It marked the beginning of the era of friendship between the Sikh Gurus and the Mughal kings. As a result, the Sikh religion and the Sikh organisation gathered so much strength in the next century that even the active opposition of the government to the Sikh Gurus after the death of Akbar, could not do any damage to the new religion.

It appears that this incident took place in the year 1557 A.D. Guru Ram Das has hinted at the embarrassment caused to Marwaha Khatri in the court of Akbar and among friends and relations in a *shabad* written by him.⁴⁵ The failure of efforts made by the Hindus of Goindwal and the establishment of good relations with the Mughal court resulted in a further increase in the influence of Guru Amar Das. After Guru Amar Das Guru Ram Das became the new Guru. We have already discussed how Bhai Jetha, who later on became Guru Ram Das, visited the court of Akbar. So the friendly relations between Akbar and Guru Ram Das continued. Bhai Jetha was asked by Guru Amar Das to select a place for himself.⁴⁶ At a distance of 40 km. from Goindwal he chose a jungle site surrounded by villages of Gilwali, Gumthala, Sultanwind and Tung having a sacred pool of water.

It was a common land or Shāmlāf Deh, and seemed to have been granted by Emperor Akbar with the consultation of the *chaudharis* of these villages who must be following in the train of the Emperor according to an old-custom and practice. The digging of the tank was started in 1577 A.D. This is considered as the foundation year of Amritsar. According to the Gazetteer of Amritsar District, "in 1577 he obtained a grant of the site, together with 500 *bighas* of land from the Emperor Akbar on payment of Rs. 700 Akbari to the *Zamindar* of Tung who owned the land.⁴⁷ There he dug a tank to which he gave the name of Amritsar, the tank of nectar, 40 km. north-west of Goindwal. Thus the relations between Guru Ram Das and Akbar were very cordial. Akbar never obstructed the Sikh movement in any way. Rather he favoured the Sikh Gurus whose views and ideas he admired. It is also said that Akbar visited Amritsar in 1577 and offered 101 gold coins to the Guru (Guru Ram Das).⁴⁸ Guru Ram Das nominated his third son Arjan, a youngman of eighteen, to be his successor, since he was the ablest and the most promising. Guru Ram Das died in September 1581 A.D.⁴⁹

Simple and saintly life of the Gurus (Amar Das and Ram Das) and their disciples, the prevailing sense of equality fostered by the institution of *langar*, devotion to God, absence of ritualism, meditation and fervour for social reforms created an abiding sense of goodwill for the Gurus and their disciples in the mind of Akbar. As a result, the Sikh movement which was still in its infancy, could strengthen itself during the next fifty years when many detractor of the Sikh faith approached the royal authorities with complaints against the Guru. But they failed to achieve any success in their nefarious activities. Their complaints were rejected by Akbar who told them that they were jealous of the Gurus and their complaints were baseless. It was during Akbar's rule that the city of Amritsar was founded, Harimandar was built and Guru Granth was compiled. The credit for establishing cordial relations with Akbar goes to the third and fourth Gurus. The reign of Akbar in the Sikh history has been called the era of goodwill and friendly understanding.

GURU ARJAN DEV (1581 A.D.—1606 A.D.)

Akbar was the Emperor of India even when Guru Arjan Dev came to the pontificate in 1581 A.D. So long as Akbar lived his friendly relations with Guru Arjan Dev continued. As a result of the teachings of the first

four Gurus, a distinct community appeared on the scene, which differed from its neighbours in religious outlook, social customs and latent political ideals. They had a common object of worship—God—and a common source of divine knowledge—their Guru. The pride of caste, on one side, and the sense of inferiority, on the other, had been replaced by a sense of love and brotherhood. The rising nation was growing in strength and organization, and was coming into prominence. Guru Arjan Dev, "who was a born poet, a practical philosopher, a powerful organizer and a great statesman,"⁵⁰ supplied what was wanting. He compiled the sacred Book for the guidance of the faithful and installed it in the Golden Temple at Amritsar. He developed a regular system for the collection of the affectionate offerings of the Sikhs, so that they might serve the purpose for which they were meant, namely, the advancement of the nation's cause. He made his darbar resemble a princely court in splendour and magnificence. He laid the foundation of the future Sikh cavalry by encouraging adventure and enterprise, and inducing them to buy horses from Turkistan and sell them in India. He also exhorted his followers to take to various profitable trades, crafts and occupations. This raised the economic status of the community. It also taught the Sikhs the lesson of self-help, self-reliance and mutual cooperation.

The teachings of the Sikh Gurus had from the beginning attracted converts equally from amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. Whole villages with hundreds of Muslims bowed before the Gurus and became their disciples. Up to the time of Akbar, the Mughal Emperors had not interfered much with this peaceful movement of conversion by persuasion and demonstration of lofty ideals in actual life.

Guru Arjan Dev set himself the task of consolidation and organisation of the Sikhs. He went on tours, preaching and organising *Sangats* or congregational worship, which he declared to be of greater merit than individual worship. He reorganised and gave a permanent character to those missionaries who had been appointed by his predecessors to spread the Sikh religion and collect the offerings of the faithful. The Sikhs were exhorted "to give a tithe of their substance to God". In a way, such offerings were made compulsory. The *masands* and their deputies, called *meoras*, collected the offerings from place to place. "This band of Guru's agents (*masands*) were stationed in every city from Kabul to Dacca, wherever there was a Sikh, to collect the tithes and offerings of the faithful; and this spiritual tribute, so far as it escaped speculation by the agents, reached the central treasury at Amritsar".⁵¹ They were not allowed to use this revenue so collected for their own use.

Thus a steady flow of revenue to the central treasury at Amritsar was assured, which made it possible for the Guru to found towns like Tarn Taran, Amritsar, Kartarpur (Jullundur) and undertake extensive building and excavation operations. In the middle of the Amritsar tank he began to build the Golden Temple, which was calculated to become a central place of worship for the Sikhs—a sort of Kaba⁵² of the Muslims.

In the early years of the pontificate of Guru Arjan, some of the Mughal officials in the Punjab like Sulhi Khan took up the cause of the pretender, Prithia (elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev) and tried to create trouble for the Guru. *Prithia* even tried to poison the ears of the Emperor against the Guru, but all his attempts failed.⁵³ Akbar, throughout his reign, remained friendly to the Sikh Gurus and the Persian historian of his reign, Badaoni, tells us that the Emperor visited Goindwal to see Guru Arjan whose teachings and character he appreciated.

Akbar's Prime Minister and court historian, Abul Fazl, writes in *Akbar Nama* that Emperor Akbar crossed river Beas at Goindwal on an elephant while his army passed over by a bridge. The Emperor called at the residence of Guru Arjan on November 24, 1598 A.D. Guru Arjan was then 35, in the prime of life. His attractive and handsome appearance, sweet and melodious voice, and fascinating and charming manners, his princely style of living, his warm reception of the Emperor, and his singing of the hymns, deeply impressed Akbar. Sujan Rai Bhandari gives greater details of this meeting. "When his Majesty left Lahore and reached the neighbourhood of Batala, he came to know that a fight had taken place in the house of Achal between Musalman *Faqirs* and a group of Hindu *Sanyasis*. The Muslim *Faqirs* prevailed and by way of retaliation they demolished the temples there. His Majesty King Akbar in order to do justice against the excesses committed, put many of them into prison and ordered that the demolished temples should be built anew. From there he crossed the river Beas and visited the dwelling place of Guru Arjan, successor of Baba Nanak, who was famous for divine love. The Emperor was highly pleased to meet him and with his recitation of the hymns of Baba Nanak in praise of God. Guru Arjan offered him a suitable present out of regard for his visit. He represented that during the stay of the imperial army in Punjab, the price of grain had gone up, and the revenues of *parganas* had been increased. Now on the departure of royal troops the price of corn would come down. It would be difficult for the subjects to pay the enhanced revenue. The Emperor acceded to his request and issued orders to his chief Diwan to reduce the revenue

by 1/6th. He instructed that the revenue must be charged according to the concession granted and nothing more should be demanded."⁵⁴ The Emperor's visit considerably raised the prestige of the Guru. The rural traders and peasants of the Majha became Sikhs in large numbers.

The most valuable achievement of Guru Arjan was the compilation of a holy book for the Sikhs known as *Adi Granth* and popularly called *Granth Sahib* or *Guru Granth*. In Sikhism worship consisted of singing the hymns of Gurus. The Guru wished to lay down the exact hymns to be sung at particular hours of the day, and correct rituals to be performed by the Sikhs. This was necessitated by the fact that his elder brother, Prithi Mal, who had been excluded from Guruship was composing his own hymns and was spreading them among the Sikhs as those of Nanak and other Gurus. Guru Arjan also desired to raise the status of Sikhs from the followers of a sect to that of a religion. This object could be attained by providing the Sikhs with holy scriptures of their own, like the *Vedas*, the *Bible* and the *Quran*. He, therefore, decided to collect the hymns of all the Gurus including his own in the form of a book in *Gurmukhi* script. The research for material began soon after Akbar's visit early in 1599 A.D. *Adi Granth* was completed in July 1604 A.D. and contained 3384 hymns and 15,575 stanzas. Of these, 13,658 stanzas are composed by Gurus and 1917 stanzas are the compositions of other saints and bards. It contains the *Bani* of five Gurus, fifteen saints and seventeen bards. The original *Granth Sahib* was installed in Hari Mandir at Amritsar on 16 August 1604 A.D. Baba Budha was appointed the first Head Granthi. The original copy of the *Adi Granth* of Guru Arjan exists in the Gurdwara at Kartarpur near Jullundur.⁵⁵

The compilation of the *Adi Granth* formed an important landmark in the history of the Sikhs. It became the sacred book of the new faith and created consciousness among the Sikhs of their being a separate community. It served as a source of divine wisdom, felicity and bliss. Its fascinating hymns chanted in deep reverence and devotion inspired the minds of listeners to lofty ideas of simple living and high thinking. The *Granth* serves as the symbolic representation of the Gurus, who are came to be represented as a single person, Nanak, the light of whose soul passed on to each of his successors one by one. The hymns established a deep spiritual unity between man and God. The hymns of *Bhakta* represent three schools of thought, Vaishnavism of Ramanand, Krishna cult of Surdas and Sufism of Farid. The *Adi Granth* is like the holy water of the Ganga. Everybody, men or women, rich or poor, high or low, *Brahmin* or *shudra*, white or black people, can have a dip without any

restriction. The Ganga water washes dirt, cools body and refreshes mind. Similarly, the *Adi Granth* purifies heart, stimulates mind and animates the soul.

The Granth is a repository of many languages. The Guru's hymns are in a mixture of Hindi and Punjabi. The compositions of Ramanand and Kabir are in Hindi. Farid's verses are in Punjabi. The language of Trilochan and Namdev is Marathi. *Adi Granth* contains words of Lahndi, Persian and Sindhi also.

The *Adi Granth* embraces territorially the whole of India and people of all castes and creeds. The Gurus themselves and Farid, a Muslim saint, belonged to Punjab, Surdas to Haryana, Kabir, Ramanand and Ravi Das to U.P., Jaideb to Bengal, Namdev and Trilochan to Maharashtra, Sain to Madhya Pradesh, Dhanna to Rajasthan, and Sadhna to Sind. As regards religion, Farid and Kabir and Mardana were Muslims. Of the Hindu castes Jaideb, Ramanand and Surdas were Brahmins. The Gurus were *kshatriyas*. Trilochan was a *vaish*, Namdev, Ravidas, Sadhna and Sain were *shudras*, and Dhanna was a *Jat*. The *Adi Granth* is indeed the greatest work of Punjabi literature.

In 1605 A.D. Emperor Akbar was at Batala during his visit to Punjab. A complaint was lodged with him by the opponents of the Guru that the *Adi Granth* contained some passages blasphemous to Islam. The Emperor called for the *Granth* to his presence. The Guru sent it in the custody of Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha. Bhai Gurdas, who had written every word of it, assured the Emperor that there was nothing against Islam and, on the contrary, it contained hymns of Muslim saints. Akbar got the *Granth*, read out at random in the presence of learned *qazis* and *pandits*. On the first opening of the *Granth*, a hymn said: We are all children of our father God. On the second opening it stated: God pervades all his creation and the creation resides in him. When there is nothing but God whom should one blame. On other pages also there was praise of God. The Emperor was satisfied. He made an offering of 51 gold coins to the *Granth* and awarded robes of honour for the Guru and to both the custodians of the *Granth*.⁵⁶

The liberal policy of Akbar gave the Sikh Gurus an opportunity to carry on their socio-religious work as best as they could. The Emperor saw nothing particularly objectionable either in the movement or in the organisation. Guru Arjan Dev's period of *Gurgaddi* coincided with the latter half of Akbar's reign, a period of intellectual quest when Akbar's

restless, inquiring mind sought the revelation of absolute truth from somewhere. Sikhism might have hoped to make considerable progress, but for its being an eyesore to the landed and religious aristocracy of the Punjab. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi bitterly opposed Guru Arjan's activities. Unfortunately, the tolerant and friendly Emperor Akbar died in 1605 A.D. and was succeeded by his fanatic son Jahangir. Under him the conspirators against the Guru got all the opportunity for their activities which resulted into the Guru's martyrdom of being tortured to death.

Guru Arjan's popularity with Emperor Akbar and people of *Majha* and *Doaba*, his achievements in building up the Hari Mandir and compiling the holy *Granth* and his style of living had become to his enemies a matter of great agony and anguish more than flesh and blood could bear. One of his enemies was his own elder brother Prithi Mal who was living at Amritsar. The second enemy Sulhi Khan lived at Batala, the district headquarters, third, Chandu Shah, lived at Lahore, fourth, Shaikh Ahmed Sarhindi at Sarhind, and the fifth, Emperor, or Jahangir himself, at Delhi.

Prithi Mal and his son Meharban called themselves the real Gurus. Both of them had composed hymns and called them as those of Guru Nanak. Meharban wrote a Janam Sakhi of Guru Nanak in which he glorified his father and discredited Guru Nanak.⁵⁷ He composed a Sukhmani in opposition to Guru Arjan's Sukhmani.⁵⁸ Both father and son were plotting against Guru Arjan.

Sulhi Khan, the second enemy of the Guru, was the Mughal officer of Batala district. He was determined to bring about Guru's ruin. Under severe persecution the Guru had to leave Amritsar for Chheharta. He was so bitterly hostile to him that the Guru mentioned him in his hymns in the *Adi Granth*. God rescued the Guru from Sulhi's clutches. One day while riding a new horse he was trying to gallop. Something frightened the horse who, perhaps due to some wild honey bees, fled headlong into the field in the direction of a smouldering brick kiln. The horse sank into the hollow ground of the kiln along with its rider who was firmly holding its reins and both were burnt alive. Guru Arjan refers to this incident in *Adi Granth*:

God preserved me from Sulhi,
Sulhi by no means succeeded,
Sulhi died unclean,
God drew forth his axe and smote off his head,

and in a moment he become ashes.
 He was consumed ever meditating evil,
 He who created him thrust him into the fire.⁵⁹

Chandu Shah, a Khatri of Lahore, a third enemy of the Guru, held an important post in the finance ministry at Delhi. He was in search of a groom for his daughter. Messengers were sent to find out a suitable match. One of them recommended Hargobind, son of Guru Arjan. Chandu Shah remarked: "What if He hath many followers liveth on offerings, which is an ignominious form of livelihood." He further added that the proposal amounted to putting "the ornamental tile of a top storey into a gutter."⁶⁰ But being persuaded by his wife, Chandu Shah agreed, and conveyed the proposal through a messenger. His remarks about the Guru were soon known to the Sikhs living in Delhi. They requested the Guru to turn down the proposal. The Guru did so. Further persuasion by Chandu Shah proved of no avail. He went in person to soothe the Guru with a lakh of rupees; but it was too late; for the Guru declared: "My words are engraved on stone, and cannot be effaced. If you give me the whole world as a dowry with your daughter, my son will not marry her."⁶¹

In those days Sarhind was the stronghold of *Naqashbandi* order. The first millennium or a period of one thousand years of the foundation of Islam was over and the second millennium had begun. Shaikh Ahmad declared that the first millennium belonged to Prophet Muhammad and the second millennium to him. He took the title of *qayum* or the deputy of God. The whole universe including the sun the moon and the earth was under his control. Nobody's prayer could reach God unless it was first accepted by him He had a large number of followers. They designated him *Majaddid Ālif Sani*, meaning controller of the universe in the second millennium.

The Shaikh was extremely jealous of Guru Arjan's popularity and power. He "made the revival of orthodoxy something of a movement".⁶² He made use of the royal power as "Jahangir himself was inclined towards the purification of beliefs and practices".⁶³ It is said that "Shaikh Ahmad eradicated the godlessness of Akbar's reign, forced the court to reform its etiquette, and made a large number of Muslims in the army and the court".⁶⁴ He was given the title of "Reviver of the second millennium", and the "Godly Imam". The Shaikh greatly incited Jahangir against Guru Arjan when he called at Sarhind in pursuit of Khusrau. The Shaikh also exercised great influence on the courtiers of Jahangir.⁶⁵ The

Shaikh declared Guru Arjan Kulah-e-Sharik and Imam-e-Kufr. Jahangir was greatly influenced by the Shaikh.

The orthodox Muslim *ulama*, all political leaders and the Muslim population, had deeply resented Akbar's policy of liberalism and toleration. The liberal element at the court was in a very small minority. They favoured Akbar's grandson and Prince Salim's son Khusrau as the emperor in the absence of law of succession in the Mughal Empire. The orthodox group which was in very great majority, supported Prince Salim (Jahangir), the only living son of Emperor Akbar. They extracted a definite and solemn promise from Prince Salim to reverse Akbar's policy as the price of their support. The leaders of orthodox *ulama* were Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi and Shaikh Farid Bukhari.⁶⁶ Under their influence Prince Salim had administered poison to Akbar in 1591 A.D. from which the Emperor had survived. In 1601 A.D. he openly revolted against his father and assumed the royal title. In 1602 A.D. he got Prime Minister Abul Fazl murdered because he was the greatest supporter of Akbar in his liberalism.⁶⁷ The *Sayyids* of Barha, well known for their religious zeal and bravery, were won over by the *ulama* in favour of Salim. The prince took solemn oaths to restore orthodoxy, punish the liberal group, and destroy non-Muslim movements.⁶⁸

Prince Khusrau Meets Guru Arjan

After the death of Akbar on October 17, 1605 A.D., the throne was contested by Prince Khusrau. His mother was Jodha Bai, daughter of Udai Singh, Raja of Jodhpur. He was born in 1592 A.D. On Khusrau's capture, she took poison and died on May 6, 1606 A.D.⁶⁹ Salim eventually succeeded under the title of Jahangir. Khusrau managed to escape from Agra fort on April 6, 1606 A.D., and made for Punjab. The Prince had already met Guru Arjan in the company of Akbar and knew him to be a sage and one who could provide him help/shelter. He sought benediction of the Guru at Tarn-Taran where Guru Arjan was then staying. Guru Arjan, as in the case of every visitor of high position, particularly of the royal family, warmly received him by applying a saffron mark on his forehead according to ancient custom of India. Applying the *tilak* implied only honourable reception and not blessing the prince with sovereignty. Mohsin Fani says that the Guru offered prayer for the Prince.⁷⁰ The prayer indicated a wish for the safety of the individual as the Prince was on a difficult journey and not for his cause.

The Guru was an embodiment of moral virtues and could not bless a son in rebellion against the father. He could not forget the case of his own elder brother who had revolted against his father. The Guru could never contemplate involving himself in the struggle for the throne. For a rebel against parents there is absolutely no room in Sikhism. This is considered as one of the most reprehensible acts.

The Prince then begged the Guru to help him with money. Guru Arjan replied that his money was meant for the poor and not for princes. Khusrau humbly pleaded that he was also very poor, needy, forlorn and in distress and did not possess even travelling expenses for his proposed flight to Kabul. The Guru was moved at the thirteen-year old Prince's sad plight, humility and the miserable state he was in, being hotly pursued by the Mughal army and the Emperor himself. According to Macauliffe, Khusrau was provided with a few thousand rupees. Beni Prasad in his history of Jahangir puts this amount at Rs. 5000.⁷¹

Jahangir's hatred for the Guru

Jahangir hated Guru Arjan for several reasons. He was opposed to all those who had been in Akbar's good books. Secondly, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi incited Jahangir against Guru Arjan when he halted at Sarhind in pursuit of Khusrau. Thirdly, Shaikh Farid Bukhari was leading the vanguard of the army which was pursuing the Prince. He was the first leader to know about Khusrau's visit to the Guru. He declared that the Guru should have captured him and ought to have handed him over to the Emperor. He, therefore, considered the Guru a rebel. Jahangir also took the same view. He wrote in his autobiography:

"A Hindu named Arjan lived at Goindwal on the bank of river Beas in the garb of a *Pir* and *Shaikh*. As a result many of the simple minded Hindus as well as ignorant and foolish Muslims had been persuaded to adopt his ways and manners and he had raised aloft the standard of sainthood and holiness. He was called Guru. From all sides cowboys and idiots became his fast followers. This business had been flourishing for three or four generations. For a long time it had been in my mind to put a stop to this vain affair (*dukan-e-batil*) or to bring him into the fold of Islam. In these days when Khusrau passed along this road, this foolishly insignificant fellow (*mardak-e-majhul*) proposed to wait on him. Khusrau happened to halt at the place where he lived. He came and met him. He discussed several matters with him and made on his forehead a finger mark in saffron. In the

terms of Hindus it is called *Qashqa* and is considered propitious.⁷² In pursuit of Khusrau Jahangir halted at Goindwal while his army had gone ahead after Khusrau. Jahangir writes: "I call God to witness that while at Goindwal, at this perilous crisis, I experienced some strong forebodings that Khusrau was coming to my presence." Just then the news came that royal forces were victorious and Khusrau had been taken prisoner.⁷³

Khusrau was arrested on the eastern bank of river Chenab on April 26, 1606 A.D. He was produced before Jahangir on May 1 and was partially blinded. The Emperor then summoned Guru Arjan to Lahore. The Guru had realized that being surrounded by enemies on all sides his end was near. Before his departure he consoled his wife Ganga thus:

"This body abideth not for ever. Wherefore a wise person should not love it. Whatever is born perisheth and whatever is high falleth sooner or later. This is nature's law . . . live thou when I am gone, mourn not for me and make no effort of thine own to separate thy soul from the body."⁷⁴

Jahangir asked the Guru why he had helped Khusrau. The Guru replied that he gave him some money for his journey and not to help him in rebellion against him. He was in a wretched condition. He had to show him some consideration out of regard for Emperor Akbar who had been very kind to him. Heartlessness and ingratitude were opposed to the principles of Guru Nanak's house. Jahangir did not feel satisfied. He wanted to punish him with death. But on the recommendation of Mian Mir commuted it by a fine of two lakhs of rupees and ordered him to efface certain verses in the *Adi Granth*. Guru Arjan replied: "Whatever money I have is, for the poor, the friendless and the stranger. If thou ask for money thou mayest take what I have, but if thou ask for it by way of fine I shall not give thee even a *kauri*, for a fine is imposed on wicked wordly persons and not on priests and anchorites. And as to what thou hast said regarding the erasure of hymns in the *Granth Sahib*, I cannot erase or alter an iota."⁷⁵

The Sikhs of Lahore showed willingness to raise subscriptions to pay the fine. The Guru issued strict injunctions not to do so. Jahangir wrote: "I ordered that he should be summoned. His houses, camps and sons were given to Murtza Khan.⁷⁶ His property and cash were confiscated. I issued instructions that he should be put to death by torture."⁷⁷ Murtza Khan deputed Chandu Shah to confiscate the Guru's

property, and he fleeced the Guru's family of everything of value. Trilochan Singh in his book *Guru Tegh Bahadur* states: "According to this order, Guru Arjan was no doubt tortured to death, but the rest of the order was definitely stayed by the intervention of saint Mian Mir. Neither were the houses and children made over to Murtza Khan nor was the property confiscated."⁷⁸ The same view is held by Khushwant Singh, who writes: "The Emperor's order to arrest the Guru's family and confiscate his property was not carried out."⁷⁹ Dr. Hari Ram Gupta States: "This is an unjustifiable assumption that Guru Arjan was fined Rs. 2 lakhs is admitted by all. The fact is that the Guru's property was confiscated, but it did not fetch two lakhs in those days when prices were extremely low. Besides who was going to buy Hari Mandir and 4 or 5 tanks built by Guru Arjan? There is further reference to the confiscation of Guru's houses and lands in Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla. On December 30, 1711 A.D., Emperor Bahadur Shah, having failed to capture Banda Bahadur on his way to Lahore, while passing through Amritsar, ordered "the release of the long confiscated lands of Chak Guru, Amritsar, in the name of Ajit Singh mentioned in the Akhbarat as the son of Guru Gobind Singh."⁸⁰

The Guru Arjan was imprisoned in the Lahore fort. May-June are the hottest months there. He was subjected by Chandu to different types of torture. He was seated on a hot pan, *tavi*, for hours together, burning sand was poured on his head and the heat of the month of May was itself made the worst use of. Boiling water was poured on his naked body at intervals. His body was covered with blisters all over. Even in this agony the Guru used to utter:

Tera Bhanā mitha lāge
*Har nam pādarath Nanak mānge*⁸¹

Meaning: Whatever you ordain appears sweet
 I supplicate for the gift of Name

On hearing the news of Guru Arjan's tortures, Mian Mir came to see him. At the sight of the Guru, the Muslim saint shed tears of blood. He cursed the government for these atrocities on an innocent man of God. In his agony he began to cry. He said he would pray for the destruction of such a cruel government. The Guru, though writhing in pain, calmed Mian Mir. He said this was the will of God, and no man should try to obstruct the working of His will. He expressed satisfaction at the *saint's* visit. He said it had brought him cooling breeze in the burning heat. Sorrow had given place to joy. Whatever was happening, it must be

taken for one's good and must be cheerfully accepted. The Guru forbade the saint to do anything against the government. Mian Mir prayed and left the Guru with a heavy heart.⁸²

According to some historians, after five days of tortures with blisters all over his body, the Guru asked for permission to go to the Ravi (river) for a bath, which was granted by Chandu. With blisters all over his body when the Guru plunged himself into the cold water of the Ravi it caused him a shooting pain of which he died and the swift current carried away his body. This took place on May 30, 1606, A.D.⁸³ The Guru was only forty-three years old. Gurudwara was later on erected at the site on the bank of river Ravi opposite the fort of Lahore, popularly called *Dera Sahib*.

The Sikh tradition considers it an act of religious persecution. It is true the Sikhs at this time formed only a religious society. They had no political aspirations. The authority of the Mughal emperors fully accepted and implicitly obeyed. The Sikh allegiance to the state was complete. Akbar's patronage to the Sikh Gurus was highly appreciated and their loyalty to the Mughal empire was firm. It is also a fact that Jahangir was biased against Sikh religion.⁸⁴ Beni Prasad in his *History of Jahangir* declares it to be a political execution. But the fact is that Guru Arjan's martyrdom was mainly a religious case coupled with local and personal jealousy and enmity. Whatever the case might be, there is no doubt that Guru Arjan set the noblest example of courage and boldness in resisting the wrongs of a mighty power on earth, and thus sowed the seed which was to bear fruit in due course. Trumpp says: "Guru Arjan's death is great turning point in the development of Sikh community, as from that time the struggle commenced that changed the entire character of reformatory religious movement."⁸⁵

Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi expressed utmost delight at Guru Arjan being tortured to death. In a letter written to Shaikh Farid Bukhari, then entitled Murtza Khan, the Governor of Punjab, he said: "The execution at this time of the accursed *Kafir* of Goindwal . . . with whatever motive . . . is an act of the highest grace for the followers of Islam."⁸⁶ He added that the Hindus should be treated as dogs. *Jazia* should be imposed upon them and cowslaughter should be allowed in the open.⁸⁷

The sacrifice of Guru Arjan is a milestone in the history of the Sikhs. At the time of his death, Guru Arjan left the following message to be taken by his followers to his son Hargobind: "I have succeeded in

effecting the object of my life. Go to my son the holy Hargobind and give him from me ample consolation. Bid him not to mourn or indulge in unmanly lamentation but sing God's praises . . . Let him sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability. Let him affix the patch of Guruship to his forehead according to an ancient custom and even treat his Sikhs with the utmost courtesy."⁸⁸ Here was a seed of revolution sown which germinated and transformed the character of the Sikhs from mere saints into saint-soldiers who later challenged the mightiest of the oriental empires and who later rolled back the flood of the never-ending foreign invasions across the river Indus.

C.H. Payne writes in his book *A Short History of the Sikhs*: "Before his departure, Guru Arjan had installed his son on the *gaddi* and impressed upon him the seriousness of the situation which had developed in the land. 'Hard Times are ahead', added he, 'the forces of evil are out to crush all vestige of even the elementary human rights. The house of Guru Nanak, from its very foundation, stands for love, truth, freedom, and self-respect. We have tried to carry on our work of emancipation in perfect peace and non-violence. But you see the result. The sight of their own cruel actions has deformed the soul of the Mughals. It may yet be possible to awaken it and make it assume the human form that it is losing fast. I shall let the Emperor witness the infinite suffering caused by his orders and borne for the love of God and man. This might shake up his soul. But if even this last measure of peaceful suffering fails, then take it from me, that his soul has been completely brutalized. It would be as unwise to bear further sufferings with the idea of debrutalizing the souls of the Mughals as to throw oneself before a horned beast with the object of making him give up his brute nature. Times are coming when the forces of good and evil must come to grips. So we get ready, my son. Gird up, arm thyself, and urge the followers to do the same. Fight the tyrants till they are reformed or banished.'⁸⁹ So Guru Arjan had seen clearly that it was impossible to preserve his followers without the aid of arms and his last injunction to his son and successor, Hargobind, was to sit fully armed on his throne and maintain the largest military force he could muster."⁹⁰

In a short time after Guru Arjan's martyrdom, as Macauliffe writes, the Guru changed his character from a mere religious to a spiritual-cum-military leader.⁹¹ It was as a result of this that Guru Hargobind later on began to raise an army, he gave martial tunes to the Sikhs to sing their songs upon, and took to hunting and physical exercises. Guru Arjan's

martyrdom, writes Khazan Singh,⁹² inflamed the peaceful Sikh hearts. It set the ball rolling and generated the spirit which later on converted the ordinary "hewer of wood and drawers of water" into the greatest of soldiers and generals of the time. The Sikhs burned with the spirit of revenge and prepared to learn the art of swords and battlefields.

The sacrifice also opened a new chapter in Sikh history, of Sikh persecutions. As the Sikh zeal to take revenge strengthened, the wave of arrests, fines and threats to the Sikhs spread. The more an effort was made to suppress them, the more the Sikhs burnt with the fire of enthusiasm and sacrifice. A precedence had been set which was strengthened by the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, and which was converted into a tradition when the tenth Guru sacrificed all of his home and hearth to protect the just interests of mankind. The tragic death of the Guru, says Teja Singh, "convinced the Sikhs that they must arm themselves and fight, if they wanted to live".

Thus, with the martyrdom of Guru Arjan begins the period when the Sikhs, besides striving for spiritual bliss, began to prepare themselves to defend their hearths and homes against the Mughal tyrants. The death of their beloved and innocent Guru taught them a lesson that without political freedom, it was difficult to obtain spiritual salvation. Like the blood of all other martyrs, the blood of Guru Arjan went a long way to bring home to the Sikhs that they must organise and arm themselves. According to Sikh tradition discussed earlier, Guru Arjan, even in his "parting message" to his disciples, foretold the future course that his successor, young Hargobind would follow.

GURU HARGOBIND (1606 A.D.—1645 A.D.)

The pontificate of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, is a period of great significance in the Sikh history. It was a period of transition when Sikhism was being transformed from a brotherhood of pious devotees to an organisation of soldier-saints. The martyrdom of Guru Arjan had made such a deep impression on his son and successor, Guru Hargobind who was then a boy of only eleven years of age, that he decided to give practical shape to the parting message of his father, "let him sit fully armed on the throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability." The boy Guru perceived that if Sikhism was to survive, it must make certain adjustments in its character and organisation. He felt that thereafter his Sikhs should lead a pious and righteous life and worship the Name, on

the one hand, and, on the other, they should be physically prepared and trained to bear arms to defend their hearths and homes against the Mughal tyrants. The Guru, therefore, decided to follow this new policy and during forty years of his pontificate, he was able to achieve the ideal that he had placed before him at the time of his accession to the Guruship.

The germs of this new policy can be traced to the time when Baba Budha, just after Guru Arjan's death, was going to confer Guruship on Hargobind. According to the usual custom, he (Baba Budha) brought a *seli* (a woollen-cord worn as a necklace by the former Gurus) and a turban, and offered the new Guru to wear them. But Guru Hargobind, putting them aside, said to the head priest, Baba Budha: "My *seli* shall be a sword-belt and I shall wear my turban with a royal aigrette."⁹³ He told his disciples that in future in the Guru's house, "religion and wordly enjoyment shall be combined—the cauldron to supply the poor and the needy, and the scimitar to smite the oppressors."

So, Guru Hargobind, from the start, tried to play a dual role—the role of helping his disciples to work for their salvation by worshipping the true lord on the lines suggested by the first five Gurus, and also preparing and training his disciples to bear arms to defend their lives, honour and rights. It was, thus, the Guru began to dress himself in martial style and wore two swords, one representing his *Miri* or secular authority, and the second signifying his *Piri* or spiritual power. Thus, the sixth Guru's ideal before his Sikhs was that they should have an all round development—development of body as well as of spirit, and his two swords represented that the Guru would, in future, not only guide his Sikhs in their spiritual affairs but also would lead them if ever there was a danger to their lives or worldly belongings.

He laid the foundation of *Akal Takht* in 1606 A.D. The Central Temple of Amritsar, or the Hari Mandir had so far been the only place where the Guru addressed his Sikhs and conducted their affairs. But now a new building was constructed a few paces beyond, where on a raised platform he began to attend regularly to the Sikh temporal affairs. Regarding this writes Archer: "He completed a shrine which Arjan had begun, the *Akal Takht* or the throne of the Timeless."⁹⁴ Khazan Singh calls it *Akal-bunga* or the house of God".⁹⁵ The use to which this new building was put, introduced considerable change in the Sikh character and organisation. Here the Guru sat like a king and administered justice to the Sikhs. Here also he accepted offerings and checked the accounts of

the *masands*. Duels were fought below and the Guru enjoyed them from here. Here the Guru also told his Sikhs heroic tales, and prepared them mentally for heroic deeds. 'There was a definite purpose in the Guru's building of the *Akal Takht* just opposite the Hari Mandir. The former was connected with Sikh politics, while the latter with religion, and each was visible from the other place so that when they were in the *Akal Takht* they should not forget their religion, and while they were in the Hari Mandir they should not forget their politics. In other words, it was the blending of Sikh politics with Sikh religion'. Thus, Khazan Singh writes: "He said that as long as he continued in Hari Mandir he should be reckoned as a saint, and in *Akal Bunga* he should be looked upon as a king." With all these developments the Sikhs actually stopped looking towards Delhi or Lahore. They felt they had their own kingdom with Guru Hargobind as their king, nay the *Sachcha Padshah*, or the True King, as against the false kings of the Mughals.

Guru Hargobind also maintained a well-equipped retinue. Mohsin Fani says that the Guru maintained a big stable of 800 horses. He had three hundred troopers on horse back and sixty men with fire arms ready to lay down their lives for the Guru. Besides these, there was a corps of 500 volunteers who received no salary from the Guru, but they got horses and weapons from the Guru, took meals from the Guru's *langar*, or free kitchen, and had sworn themselves to offer their lives for the Guru. As with the inauguration of the new policy, the Guru required a large number of horses and weapons, he issued an encyclical letter to the *masands* to the effect that he would be pleased with those who brought offerings of arms and horses instead of money. As the Guru was very fond of hunting, his retinue also included a number of drummers, dogs of the finest breed, and tamed leopards.

The Guru, however, did not depend wholly on this small standing army of his bodyguards. In course of time, he recruited a large number of mercenaries—mostly malcontents and refugees from the Mughal government. There was a special force consisting of *Pathans* led by Painda Khan. The Guru fortified his possessions also. A wall was built round the city of Ramdaspur and this new fortified town began to be called Lohgarh.

These major changes in the policy and programme of the Guru naturally involved some minor changes in the day-to-day routine of the Guru. For example, with the adoption of the policy of armed defence, the Guru began to spend a major portion of his time in the game of the

chase. He began to devote a good deal of time in hearing martial music from his minstrel, Abdullah. He withdrew all prohibitions on diet, including animal food. He also introduced the practice of choirs circumambulating the Golden Temple in the night, "with the blare of trumpets and flare of torches and singing hymns in stirring tones".⁹⁶

The change in the policy was in fact the only course open to the Guru. Banerjee who has made a thorough and critical study of the Guru's career, says: Both externally and internally the situation was changing and the policy of the Guru had perforce to be adjusted to the new environment. The organisational development of Sikhism had mostly taken place during the tolerant days of Akbar who had never interfered with it; he had, on the contrary, even helped the Gurus in various ways. But the execution of Guru Arjan, and Hargobind's imprisonment, definitely showed that sterner days were ahead and that the old policy of the mere peaceful organisation no longer sufficed. Guru Arjan had foreseen and Guru Hargobind also clearly saw that it would no longer be possible to protect the Sikh community and its organisation without the aid of arms and the way in which he proceeded to secure this end speaks a good deal for his sagacity and his shrewd political sense.⁹⁷

Thus, he did not adopt his new policy because he was not as spiritually developed as his predecessors were, but because he, as head of the new community, felt that the old policy of peaceful organisation could no longer protect his infant church. With the change in the policy of the Mughal emperors towards Sikhism, the Sikhs foresaw wisely that Sikhism should be converted from a brotherhood of devotees to a militant sect. If Hargobind had not followed this policy then his "community of pious householders" would have either not survived or, at the most, "relapsed into the limited merit or utility of monks and mendicants."

The reports against king-like and war-like activities of the Guru aroused the anger of Jahangir. The Emperor was persuaded to believe that Guru Hargobind intended to raise the banner of revolt. He had visited Punjab in 1606, 1607 and 1608 A.D. The Guru's enemies (Prithi Mal and his son Meharban, Chandu Shah and his son Karam Chand, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi and Shaikh Farid Bukhari—(Murtza Khan, viceroy of Punjab) must have lodged complaints against him personally. Jahangir ordered the Guru to pay the balance of the fine of two lakhs imposed upon Guru Arjan after deducting the amount already realised

by auctioning his property.⁹⁸ Mohsin Fani writes: "He had to content with difficulties. One of them was that he had adopted the style of a soldier, wore a sword contrary to the practice of his father, kept a retinue and took to hunting. Hazrat Jannat Makani (Jahangir) demanded the balance of the fine which he had imposed on Arjan Mal."⁹⁹

Guru Hargobind was summoned to Delhi. Hargobind entrusted the secular affairs of the Sikhs to Baba Budha and control of spiritual duties to Bhai Gurdas, though Baba Budha continued to work as high priest of Hari Mandir. At Delhi, the Guru stayed at Majnun Ka Tila on the bank of river Yamuna where Guru Nanak had lived with the Muslim Saint Majnun in the reign of Sikandar Lodi. Large crowds of Sikhs came to see him. Jahangir found him a handsome and plucky youth and received him courteously. He asked him several questions but Jahangir did not feel satisfied. With regard to fine, Hargobind advanced the old argument of his father. He said he had not committed any crime and he would not pay any fine. As for his taking to hunting and wearing arms, no restrictions had been imposed by the government on its subjects. About his holding courts, the Guru submitted that it concerned only religious matters. There was no politics behind it, and he did not preach anything against the Emperor or his government. He assured the Emperor that he was a loyal subject of his Majesty's government and always abided by its laws.¹⁰⁰

Jahangir invited the Guru to join him in a hunting expedition, when Hargobind displayed his skill by slaying a tiger. The Emperor took the Guru with him on a visit to Agra. Most likely Jahangir wanted to admit Guru Hargobind to his Mansabdari system so that the soldiers of the Guru could be used for the empire and the risk of revolt from the side of Guru would also be over. On the way to Agra, the Emperor sounded the Guru number of times and purposely became very friendly. He also asked a number of questions and discussed about religion. Jahangir asked many spiritual questions and Guru's replies very much impressed the Emperor. He asked why he was called the true king which implied that the Emperor was a false king. The Guru replied: "I have never told any one to call me true king, but when there exists love between people, there is no need of formality and a man is treated as he treateth others. I love my Sikhs in proportion to the love they bear me."¹⁰¹ When Emperor failed to persuade the Guru to join Mansabdari system, he arrested the Guru and ordered that he should be imprisoned in the Gwalior Fort, where generally the important political offenders were kept. The Sikh chroniclers, however, say that the Guru was not arrested.

He became a victim of Chandu's intrigue. Chandu had not liked the friendly relations of Jahangir and the Guru and so he conspired against the Guru. At Agra, the Emperor fell ill. Due to Chandu Shah's instigation the astrologers told Jahangir to imprison Hargobind to avert the serious consequences of the evil stars. Hargobind was, therefore, confined in the fort of Gwalior, without specifying any duration. But Mohsan Fani's account seems to be more reliable. He says that the Emperor had not liked Guru Hargobind's policy of armed defence and, on the pretext of extorting the fine from the Guru, he arrested him and sent him to the fort of Gwalior.

But the historians do not agree as to the exact period of his confinement at Gwalior fort. Mohsan Fani says that he remained there for 12 years. Indubhushan Banerjee and Teja Singh, after a careful and analytical study of the important events of Guru Hargobind's career, such as the births of the children of the Guru, have proved conclusively that the Guru could have in no way spent such a long period in Gwalior. Banerjee says that at the most he remained in Gwalior for five years from 1607 to 1612 A.D. But Teja Singh held the view that he might have remained in Gwalior fort for two years at the most, from 1612 to 1614 A.D. According to Sikh tradition, the Guru's period of confinement in Gwalior was only "forty days". On account of such a wide disagreement among historians, it is difficult to determine the exact period of the Gwalior imprisonment of the Guru. This much, however, is certain that the period of confinement was very short and could not be 12 years or even 5 years.

The more rational view is that if the Guru was arrested due to his war-like activities, he must have carried such activities to a considerable length before he was arrested. We must, therefore, allow at least four years for his preparations so that they should be of a magnitude sufficiently high as to move the Mughal authorities against him. Thus, if we permit four years on this score, the Guru should have been imprisoned for about two years, and he was positively released sometimes in 1612 as his eldest son Gurditta was born in 1613 A.D. So he should have been in the fort for about two years from 1610 to 1612 A.D. It could be even less than two years; but it seems certain that the period of his confinement was between 1610 A.D. to 1612 A.D.

During the period of confinement of the Guru, the Sikhs made Gwalior their place of pilgrimage. Crowds of Sikhs visited Gwalior, touched and kissed the walls of the fort which held their persecuted

Guru. Some of the devoted Sikhs like Bhai Jetha pleaded with the Emperor about the innocence of the Guru. Even a well-placed Mughal official Wazir Khan requested Jahangir that the Guru was the victim of a conspiracy and so should be released. Similarly, some of the Mohammaden saints like Mian Mir, for whom Jahangir had great regard, assured the Emperor of the saintliness of the Guru. At last Jahangir felt that the Guru had suffered because of the evil minded Chandu and ordered that the Guru should be set at liberty. When the orders reached Gwalior, a large number of captive Rajas, who were also imprisoned there, expressed great attachment for the Guru. Consequently, Guru Hargobind informed the Emperor that he would go out of the Gwalior Fort only when all other fellow prisoners were set at liberty. At last, the Emperor yielded and allowed all to go out of the fort, each holding a part of his garment. For, this noble act, the Guru earned the title of *Bandi Chhor Baba* or a 'Holy Deliverer', and a cenotaph bearing this epithet still exists in Gwalior fort.

From the time of his release to the end of Jahangir's life, the Guru maintained very cordial relations with the Mughal Emperor. As the Emperor had realised that the Guru and his father had suffered a good deal because of Chandu, so, immediately after the Guru's release, he handed over Chandu and his family to him to punish them in any way he liked.¹⁰² The Guru's Sikhs took away Chandu, tied his hands behind his back, paraded him in the streets of Amritsar and Lahore, and in the end someone stabbed him to death. But Chandu's wife and son, were set free.

The Sikh tradition tells us that during this period the relations between Jahangir and the Guru were so good that the former visited Amritsar and even offered to bear all the expenses of his new building of *Akal Takht*. But the Guru declined, saying: "Let me and my Sikhs raise this throne of God with the labour of our own bodies and with the contributions from our own little resources. I wish to make it a symbol of my Sikhs' service and sacrifice, and not a monument to the king's generosity."¹⁰³

Some writers, like Mohsin Fani, say that Emperor Jahangir even offered a mansab of 700 horses and asked him to exercise a supervisory control over the Punjab officials.¹⁰⁴ But the Sikh chroniclers do not subscribe to this view. They say that the Guru accompanied Jahangir on his tours and expeditions in Rajputana and Kashmir not as a Mansabdar of Jahangir but as his friend. In the face of these divergent views, we can

say only this much with certainty that from the day of his release to the death of Jahangir, the Guru and the Sikhs must have been in the good books of the Emperor and during this period the Guru must have increased his military strength without arousing the wrath of the Emperor.

Succession of Shah Jahan

Jahangir fell seriously ill in 1627 A.D. He went to Kashmir for a change of climate. His condition deteriorated. While returning the Emperor died at Rajauri on November 7, 1627, A.D. Nur Jahan and her brother Asaf Khan were with him. At Lahore, Nur Jahan declared her son-in-law and son of Jahangir, Shahryar, Emperor of India. Asaf Khan was interested in his own son-in-law, Shah Jahan, another son of Jahangir. He was in the Deccan. Asaf Khan sent most trusted runner, Banarsi, to Shah Jahan, calling him immediately to the north. Meanwhile, Asaf Khan defeated Shahryar. Shah Jahan ascended the throne on February 24, 1628, A.D. He started his reign with the execution of all his brothers and nephews. Though, born to a Hindu mother, he became an orthodox Muslim. For some time, the relations of the new Emperor with Guru Hargobind continued to be friendly. The son of Shah Jahan, Dara Shikoh, was particularly very favourably disposed towards the Guru. But, despite this, the new militant policy of Guru Hargobind soon brought him into conflict with the Mughals.

First, there took place the case of Kaulan. She was probably¹⁰⁵ the daughter of the Qazi Rustam Khan of Lahore. She was a religious minded woman and remained busy in meditation. After some time, Kaulan became the disciple of saint Mian Mir. The Qazi did not like these odd ways of his daughter and began to illtreat her. Tired of her father's ill treatment, she took refuge with the Guru at Amritsar.¹⁰⁶ This case occurred in the reign of Jahangir. The Qazi could not prevail upon the Emperor to take action against the Guru because of Jahangir's friendship with the Guru. But with the accession of Shah Jahan, the Qazi of Lahore again began to represent that serious action should be taken against the Sikh Guru.

Secondly, the Guru's increasing military strength and particularly his enlistment of most of fugitives, free-booters and malcontents from the imperial army caused great misgivings in the minds of the Mughal officers of the Punjab and they reported that the rising power of this new military sect must be checked immediately. Guru Hargobind's

recruitment of Pathan mercenaries like Painda Khan made the Emperor realise that the Guru's aim of taking such people into his fold could be no other but political. And Shah Jahan, therefore, felt obliged to take military action against him.

Another cause of conflict was that Shah Jahan immediately after his accession, forbade conversion of Mohammedans to any other religion, which meant that the Guru must stop preaching his faith to the Muslims. Besides, Emperor Shah Jahan ordered that the *baoli* of Guru Arjan should be destroyed and a mosque be erected on its site. The Sikhs and their Guru could not submit to all this and, thus, a conflict between them and the Emperor became inevitable.

Battle of Amritsar (1628 A.D.)¹⁰⁷

The immediate cause of the Sikh-Mughal hostilities was the forcible seizure of an imperial hawk by the Sikhs. One day, in 1628 A.D. Shah Jahan was hunting in the neighbourhood of Amritsar. At Gumtala¹⁰⁸ one of his special hawks strayed away and consequently was seized by the Sikhs. The soldiers approached the Sikhs and demanded that the bird be returned. The Guru would have returned the royal hawk had not the imperial party threatened the Guru and his Sikhs with dire consequences. The two parties came to blows and in the end the soldiers were beaten off.¹⁰⁹ Shah Jahan could not overlook this and so he sent a large expedition of about 7000 strong under the leadership of Mukhlis Khan to teach a lesson to the Guru and his Sikhs. According to Mohsin Fani, the city of the Guru, i.e. Amritsar, was sacked and looted. Even the Guru's property was plundered. The Sikh detachment in the Lohgarh being too small, was destroyed by the Mohammedans. The next day being fixed for the marriage of Bibi Viro, the Guru's daughter, a lot of sweets had been stored in the fort which the Muslim soldiers ate to their fill and fell to deep sleep. The Sikhs finding an opportunity fell upon them and slaughtered great many of them, the rest having fled away. After a sharp scuffle the Guru retired to Chubbal, 25 kilometres south-west of Amritsar, where he performed the nuptial ceremony in haste on the fixed day of the marriage and prepared his Sikhs for the attack on the Mughals. Mukhlis Khan was killed in the battle.

Syed Muhammad Latif writes: "Mukhlis Khan marched from Lahore at the head of 7000 troops, who were, however, signally defeated near Amritsar, their leader being killed in the engagement. The defeated army returned to Lahore after losing many, killed and wounded. This was the

first combat in the annals of the Punjab which was fought between the Mughals and the Sikhs."¹¹⁰ The Guru's fame spread far and wide. Sir Jadunath writes: "Many men came to enlist under the Guru's banner." They said that none else had power to contend with the Emperor.¹¹¹ After the battle of Amritsar Guru Hargobind went to Hargobindpur and stayed there for some time.¹¹²

Battle of Hargobindpur (1630 A.D.)

At Hargobindpur, the Guru fought another battle with the Mughal soldiers in 1630 A.D. It is said that one Bhagwana, a relation of Chandu, had misappropriated some of the Guru's property. Bhagwana was killed by the Sikhs, but Rattan Chand, his son, appealed to Abdulla Khan, the faujdar of Jullundur Doab, who marched upon the Sikhs with his soldiers but was completely defeated and fled from the battlefield. The Guru was involved in a number of engagements with the imperial troops. He had to change his headquarters from Amritsar to Sri Hargobindpur, and later to Kartarpur in Jullundhur district, again to Phagwara and finally to Kiratpur.

The Battle of Lahra and Gurusar (December 1634 A.D.)

After a few years, hostilities again broke out between the Mughals and the Sikhs. This time, the immediate cause of the trouble was not the hawk, but the horses. One of the Guru's devoted Sikhs, Sadh¹¹³ or Sadah or Sadhu, was ordered to bring horses for the Guru from Central Asia. Mohsin Fani says he had not gone far away from Amritsar when he was informed that his little son who was deeply attached to his father, had seriously fallen ill, and was asked to return. Such was his devotion to the Guru that he replied: "If he should die, there is enough wood in the house to burn him. I am going on Guru's business and I will not return." His son passed away, but he did not come back.¹¹⁴

Sadh¹¹⁵ first went to Balkh. On finding that the quality of horses he wanted to buy not being available there, he came to Iraq. There he purchased three horses of the finest breed. On his return journey he was accompanied by Mohsin Fani from Kabul to Lahore. He writes: "Sadh is a man happy at good luck but never sad in misfortune." At Lahore, Sadh's two horses, Dilbagh and Gulbagh, were seized by Khalil Beg, the Governor. Another devoted Sikh was Bidhi Chand. Mohsin Fani says: "Earlier Bidhia was a thief."¹¹⁶ Whenever, the Guru wanted to punish

some miscreant, he deputed Bidhia to do so. The Guru told him: "On doomsday his disciples would not be asked to give an explanation for their deeds."¹¹⁷ Bidhi Chand was sent to recover the two horses. In disguise he took up service in the Lahore fort first as a groom and afterwards as a tracker. In course of time he managed to escape with both the horses one by one. They were renamed by the Guru, Janbhai and Suhela.¹¹⁸

The Guru recruited a Pathan brigand Painsa Khan on five rupees a day. Painsa Khan's mother had been Hargobind's wet nurse and her son was a playmate and bosom friend of Hargobind. The Guru treated him with great consideration. He was given a house and a buffalo for milk.¹¹⁹ He was a brave soldier. Hargobind was conscious of the mighty power of the Mughal Empire and his own meagre resources. Expecting reprisal, the Guru took shelter in the Lakhi jungle lying between Firozpur and Bhatinda. As anticipated, a strong contingent of the Governor of Lahore pursued the Guru into the impenetrable retreat. Kamar Beg and Lal Beg were sent out from Lahore at the head of an army which crossed the Sutlej, but want of provisions and the difficulties of the march had a disastrous effect on the imperial troops.¹²⁰ The Guru went on retreating before the imperial troops. He arrived at the heart of the waterless country of Brar Jats, a war-like people. They were sympathetic to the Sikhs on account of Guru Amar Das's *Manji system*. The Sikhs lay in ambush and defeated the enemy, but at a heavy cost of 1200 Sikh soldiers. This engagement took place near Lahore Gaga or village Lahra about 100 km. from Bhatinda on December 16, 1634, A.D.¹²¹ The Guru turned towards north pursued by the Mughals. Another action was fought. At the place of battle the Guru built a tank now called Gurusar. It is situated near Nathana, a village five kilometres from Rampura Phul railway station.¹²² Mohsin Fani says: "Khalil Beg's high handedness did not bring him prosperity. The same year his son who was responsible for this act died, and he himself suffered insults and disgrace."¹²³ After this battle, the Guru now returned to the plains and came back to Kartarpur.

The Battle of Kartarpur (April 26, 1635 A.D.)¹²⁴

Now differences arose between Guru Hargobind and Painsa Khan. He deserted the Guru and sought service with the Governor of Lahore. An expedition under the command of Mir. Badehra and Painsa Khan was dispatched against the Guru. They were joined by the Jullundur troops. The Guru had only 5000 soldiers with him.¹²⁵ In a hard fought

battle both the enemy commanders were killed. In this battle the Guru's youngest son Tyag Mal displayed remarkable skill and won the title of Togh Bahadur from his father.

Kale Khan assumed command of the Mughal forces and continued to fight. To avenge the death of his leaders he rushed upon the Guru with a drawn sword, and delivered a vehement attack on him. The Guru warded off the blow and then assaulted him saying: "Not so, but the sword is used thus." In one stroke Kale Khan's head flew off. At this Mohsin Fani remarks that Guru Hargobind did not strike in anger but deliberately and to give instruction, because the function of the Guru was to teach.¹²⁶ In this battle the Guru's beloved steed, Dilbagh, renamed Janbai, was severely wounded and it died soon afterwards at Kiratpur.¹²⁷ Guru Hargobind felt very sad at the death of his old brave soldier (Painda Khan). The Guru, on seeing Painda Khan's body, was filled with pity and regret. He took his shield and put it over his victim's face so as to shade it from the sun and, bursting into tears, said: "Painda Khan, I cherished thee, I reared thee and I made thee a hero. Though men spoke ill of thee, I forgot thy failings, and evil to thee never entered my mind, but evil destiny so mislead thee that thou broughtest an army against me. It is thine own acts of ingratitude and insolence that have led to thy death at my hands. . . . Though thou hast been ungrateful and untrue to thy salt, I pray the Almighty to grant thee dwelling in heaven."¹²⁸

The Battle of Phagwara (April 29, 1635, A.D.)¹²⁹

The Guru had suffered heavy losses in men and material. He expected another attack from the enemy. He hurriedly retired from Kartarpur in order to reach Kiratpur via Phagwara. The Mughal troops reorganised themselves and pursued the Guru. It was almost a running battle. At Phagwara another pitched battle was fought three days later on April 29, 1635, A.D. It was a drawn battle.¹³⁰ The Guru rushed towards the Rupa ferry to cross river Satluj. The Mughal soldiers gave up the pursuit. Kiratpur was situated in the territory of Raja Tara Chand of Kahlur who had thrown off allegiance to Emperor Shah Jahan. Mohsin Fani concludes: "Many strong forces had been sent against him. By God's grace he escaped unhurt, though whatever he had was lost."¹³¹

Hargobind was the first Guru to have resorted to arms in order to redress the grievances of the community. Constitutional agitation was meaningless as there was no constitution. He made it clear to everybody

that fighting against the wrongs was not against the spirit of any religion but it was an essential ingredient of a practical religion and that hunting and sport were not opposed to religious piety. The Guru had fully justified his wearing of two swords, representing *miri* and *piri*. He combined in himself the spiritual and military leadership. The political aspect of it was left out, as the time was not opportune yet.

The Guru's battles were not of aggressive nature. They were generally defensive. With his slender resources he could not maintain a constant struggle against the government. He did not want any territory to carve out a state for himself, nor did he refuse to accept the Mughal authority. His only object was to express his resentment against the wrong religious policy of the rulers. In achieving this objective he was successful.

In fact the Guru was trying to change the age-long mentality of Hindus of offering only passive resistance to the oppressors. He knew that the Muslim sword had completely wiped out the remains of Buddhism from the land of its birth. Hinduism had survived because a section of it, the Rajputs, had put up a tough fight against the foreigners. In Punjab the spirit of resistance had been completely broken. After 600 years of slavery he was awakening his fellow countrymen to the realisation that irrespective of consequences, which were quite obvious, the people should rise against a cruel government to get their wrongs redressed.

The organisational evolution of Sikhism from the standpoint of religion and spiritualism had almost been completed during the time of Guru Arjan. The execution of Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind's own imprisonment had clearly shown that a hard lot was in store for the new religion. Guru Hargobind had a definite perception of the changing circumstances and had realised the necessity of playing an active role in the political life of the community. He had a clear conception that militarily he had little chance of success against the almost unlimited resources of the Mughal empire. Yet he considered it below his dignity to adopt a submissive role, which was nothing short of degradation.

He clearly enunciated a policy which was to lead the most down-trodden people slowly but inexorably to political and military advancement. The Guru created a revolution in the life of the Sikhs. Along with recitation of hymns they were taught the practical lessons of *dharma yudha* or holy war. This factor his critics could not see or

comprehend. Guru Hargobind rendered a unique service to this country in showing the true path of deliverance from political bondage.

GURU HAR RAI
(1645 A.D.—1661 A.D.)

Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, died in 1645 A.D. He had five sons, only two had survived him. The elder Suraj Mal was a worldly man and the youngest Tegh Bahadur was a recluse. The Guru's deceased eldest son Gurditta had two sons, Dhir Mal and Har Rai. The Guru's choice fell on Har Rai, his grandson, the son of Gurditta, who had impressed his grandfather with his piety and kind disposition. Har Rai, however, had an elder brother, Dhir Mal, but his grandfather, Guru Hargobind, took him to be an incarnation of Prithia and so, in preference to him, decided to nominate Har Rai as his successor. He was, at that time, only fourteen years old. He was strongly advised to retain the existing contingent of 2200 mounted soldiers as his bodyguard. For some time his relations with the Mughal Empire remained cordial. It is said that Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan, had developed such great regards for the Guru that when the former fell ill, the Guru sent him a medicine by which he was speedily cured. A little later, Dara was involved in the war of succession (1657-58 A.D.) against his brothers and was defeated at Sammugarh. He, thereupon, came to Punjab to raise an army to make another bid to recover his lost dominions. In the course of this visit, he came to the Guru also and asked him for military aid and his blessings. It is said that the Guru gave him some help. But this assistance did not prove useful to Dara as most of his Muslim nobles deserted him. Most probably it was moral and spiritual help.¹³²

Aurangzeb sent for the Guru immediately after his succession as he was annoyed with the Guru for the help, whether active or passive, given by him to rebel Dara. The Guru sent his fourteen-year old eldest son Ram Rae in September 1661, A.D. He was instructed to concentrate on God and reply to the Emperor patiently and carefully. He was reminded of Guru Arjan's conduct when Jahangir ordered him to modify hymns in the *Holy Granth*. He was warned to avoid flattery and behave with dignity. The lad, being over-zealous and ambitious and perhaps out of fear for his life, tried to win over the Emperor and his courtiers. He was asked to explain why the following verse in the holy Granth abused the Musalmans:

"Mitti Musalmān ki pere pai kumhar; Ghar bhānde ittān Kiān jalti kare pukār"¹³³ [The dust of a Musalman is kneaded by a potter into a dough and he converts it into pots and bricks, which cry out as they burn]. The hymn was uttered by Guru Nanak to show that cremation and burial differed little. Ram Rae was overawed by the splendour of the court. In order not to offend the Emperor, Ram Rae just in his early teens, replied that Nanak's actual word was *Beimān* or faithless and not Musalman which appeared in the text by the mistake of the scribe. He had forgotten that he being the Guru's son and a probable candidate for next Guruship and employed on such a delicate mission had upon him a tremendously heavy responsibility and that he should be ready for death. His answer naturally pleased the Emperor but offended the Sikhs of Delhi who reported the matter to the Guru at Kiratpur.

Guru Har Rai was deeply distressed at his son's behaviour for having insulted Guru Nanak and the *Granth Sahib*. The Guru declared Ram Rae unfit for Guruship and immediately excluded him from succession. Guru Har Rai observed: "The Guruship is like a tiger's milk which can only be contained in a golden cup. Only he who is ready to devote his life hitherto is worthy of it. Let Ram Rae not look on my face again."¹³⁴ His decision was conveyed to Ram Rae as well as to the Sikhs at Delhi.¹³⁵ Ram Rae was detained at the Mughal court where he conducted himself as a faithful courtier. Shortly afterwards Guru Har Rai died at Kiratpur on October 6, 1661, A.D. at the young age of 32.¹³⁶

GURU HAR KRISHAN (1661 A.D.—1664 A.D.)

Guru Har Rai had nominated his younger son Har Krishan to be his successor, when he was only five years old. Ram Rae who was living at Delhi pressed his claim for Guruship. Aurangzeb was fully occupied in settling the state affairs and had no time to turn his attention to a matter which had no urgency. In 1662 A.D. he fell seriously ill, and next year went to Kashmir to recoup his health. He returned to Delhi on January 18, 1664 A.D. Aurangzeb was a pastmaster in the art of diplomacy. He wanted to take full advantage of the rift which had developed between the two brothers. He was keen to use Ram Rae in weakening the Sikh movement. He summoned Har Krishan to Delhi to justify his claim to Guruship, and asked Mirza Raja Jai Singh to call the Guru to Delhi on his personal surety.¹³⁷ The Guru's mother Krishan Kaur¹³⁸ was terribly afraid of the machinations of Ram Rae and the stern character of the

Emperor who had destroyed all his male relatives in the most brutal manner. Guru Har Krishan came to Delhi and put up in the house of Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur at the village of Raisina in the suburbs of the capital. Shortly afterwards the Guru had an attack of small pox with high fever, and he became almost unconscious. Owing to the infectious disease, the Guru was shifted to a house in village Bhogal near the present Nizamuddin railway station. His followers who were attending on him realized that the Guru might succumb to the fatal disease. They were anxious to secure his nomination of a successor according to old tradition. They placed a coconut and five paise before him and pressed him to name his successor. In delirium the child could utter only *Baba Bakala* meaning that the next Guru lived at Bakala. As a rule, a child would never call his parents or grandparents by name out of respect. Obviously he meant Tegh Bahadur, his grand uncle, who was living at Bakala, four kilometre to the north of modern Beas railway station. Having said this he closed his eyes, became unconscious and expired on March 30, 1664, A.D. at the age of eight. He was cremated on the bank of river Yamuna where now stands Gurudwara Bala Sahib. A big Gurudwara was later on constructed at Raisina. It is called Bangla Sahib.

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

(1664 A.D.—1675 A.D.)

Guru Har Krishan's successor, Tegh Bahadur, thus inherited the hostility of the Mughal Emperor, but, for some time, mainly through the intercession of Mirza Raja Ram Singh, Aurangzeb did not take any serious action against the Guru. Rather, the Rajput chief took the Guru with him in his Assam expedition. After the conquest of Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur returned to Punjab and settled at Anandpur.

By this time, Aurangzeb had securely established himself on the throne of Delhi. Now he embarked on his long cherished religious policy of bigoted persecution and religious discrimination. It was intended not only to satisfy the inhuman Sunni bigot within himself, but also to please the fanatic orthodox Muhammedans in India and abroad. His cruel and homicidal treatment of his father, brother and their families, on the one hand, and the cold-blooded murder of pious and liberal-minded sufis and shias, on the other, had earned for him the disapprobation, nay even condemnation, of the saner section of the whole Muslim world. For example, the Sheriff of Mecca refused to receive his envoys although they brought him many presents. Shah Abbas of Persia hated Aurangzeb and condemned him for his treatment of his father and his brother.

Aurangzeb was anxious to rehabilitate himself in the good books of his coreligionists. Spurred in part by that anxiety and partly by fanatic Muhammedan divines, but chiefly by the promptings of his own merciless, bigoted heart, he embarked "on a militant policy of religious persecution" and "allowed the religious fanatic to get the upper hand of the king". "He had resolved" says Latif, "that the belief in one God and the Prophet should be not the prevailing, but the only religion of the Empire of Hindustan." He issued mandates to the viceroys and governors of provinces to destroy pagodas and idols throughout the dominion. Guru Tegh Bahadur was on his eastern tour when he got reports of Aurangzeb's fanaticism and his determination to convert the Hindu population to Islam, and to make Hindu India a purely Muslim state.

In the beginning of his reign, Aurangzeb ordered, the local officers in every town and village of Orissa from Katak to Mednipur to pull down all temples including even clay huts, built during the last 10 or 12 years and to allow no old temple to be repaired.¹³⁹ In 1661-62 A.D., a big temple was demolished at Mathura and a Jama Masjid was erected in its place in the heart of Hindu population.¹⁴⁰ From April 1665 A.D., Hindus were charged double the custom duties paid by Muslims on all articles brought for sale.¹⁴¹ In May 1667 A.D., Muslims were exempted from payment of custom duties altogether, while the Hindus had to pay at the old rate of 5%. In 1668 A.D., Hindu fairs and festivals were stopped.¹⁴² According to Irfan Habib, peasants in many cases were compelled to part with their women and children for good to meet the revenue demands.¹⁴³

Muhammad Saqi Musta-id-Khan in *Masir-e-Alamgiri* says that in April 1669 A.D., the Director of the Faith issued orders to all the governors of provinces to destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of infidels, and they were strictly enjoined to put a stop to the teaching and practising of idolatrous forms of worship.¹⁴⁴ In May 1669 A.D., Gokal, a Jat of Tilpat, near Mathura, revolted. Aurangzeb sent a strong force against him. Gokal was captured and cut to pieces. His women folk were given away to Muslims. Five thousand jats were killed and 7000 were taken prisoners.¹⁴⁵ In January 1670 A.D., the biggest temple of Keshav Rae at Mathura was destroyed and the city was named Islamabad.¹⁴⁶ The temple was built by Raja Narsing Deo at a cost of thirty-three lakhs of rupees. Its gilded domes were so high that they could be seen from Agra, 54 km. away. Syed Muhammad Latif says: "The richly decorated idols of the temples were removed to Agra and placed beneath the steps leading to the mosque of Nawab Begam."¹⁴⁷ The destruction of Hindu

places of worship was one of the chief duties of the Muhtasibs or Censors of Morals who were appointed in all the sub-divisions and cities of the Empire.¹⁴⁸ About three hundred temples in various parts of Rajasthan were destroyed and their idols broken.¹⁴⁹

The Emperor appointed Mullas, with a party of horses to each, to check all ostentatious display of idol worship, and some time afterwards, he forbade fairs on Hindu festivals, and issued a circular to all governors and men in authority prohibiting employment of Hindus in the offices of state immediately under them, and commanding them to offer all such offices to Muhammedans only. All servants of the state were ordered to embrace the Muhammedan religion under pain of dismissal. A large number of *jogis*, *sannyasis* and other religious men were driven out of the King's dominion. He reimposed *jizia* or poll-tax¹⁵⁰ on Hindus throughout his dominions.¹⁵¹ Goods belonging to Hindu merchants were subjected to custom duty twice as heavy as demanded from Muhammedan traders.

"The Sikhs, who were also infidels, could not expect a better treatment than the Hindus, and we are told that "Aurangzeb ordered the temples of the Sikhs to be destroyed and Guru's agents, *masands*, for collecting tithes and presents of the faithful, to be expelled from the cities."¹⁵² By his wanton persecution and his deliberate suppression of the religions of the infidels, Aurangzeb raised a whirlwind throughout the empire and the Sikhs could not remain unaffected."¹⁵³

It was in the reign of this monarch that Guru Tegh Bahadur had to carry on his work of preparing the people to free themselves from oppression and bondage and developing in them a longing and an urge to assert their rights as human beings. He went on extensive tours throughout India for preaching his faith and ideals. By virtue of his personal qualities and activities, he came to be known and respected far and wide. He was known throughout upper India, was highly revered by Rajput princes, and was actually worshipped by the peasantry of the Punjab, and was generally looked upon as a champion of the Hindus.¹⁵⁴

Aurangzeb's religious policy, which aimed at the establishment of an orthodox Sunni state, had now raised a storm affecting every part of the country. It was idle to expect that a man of the position and eminence of Guru Tegh Bahadur could remain unaffected.¹⁵⁵ As a matter of fact, his

personal influence and popular propaganda formed a great obstacle in the way of Aurangzeb's proselytising campaign. Consequently, he decided to put an end to the Guru's life and activities. He did that without any compunction or delay.

Guru Tegh Bahadur used to spend his time in peaceful pursuits and charitable work. By the time he became the Guru, Sikh society had developed as a militant organisation and the people were exhorted not to tolerate tyranny, oppression and injustice from any political ruler. Aurangzeb had started considering Tegh Bahadur as more of a political enemy than as the leader of a religious sect. From the sixth Guru onwards the entire outlook of the Sikhs had changed—They must defend themselves against political aggression with their own power and should not look to any supernatural power for this. Permitting a tyrant to commit atrocities is a sin. Force can be met only by force. The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, provided opportunity to develop the Sikh society further on the lines laid down by the previous Gurus. Tegh Bahadur had been given full training as a soldier and a military leader and he had even fought a battle under his father against the Mughals at a young age of fourteen.

Guru Tegh Bahadur had undertaken long preaching tours, enlisting many new converts to the Sikh faith. While such activities of the non-Muslims could be tolerated under benign rulers such as Akbar, they could hardly be put up with under the religious fanatics as Aurangzeb was. Ram Rae had already been in Delhi adding fuel to the fire. A distorted picture of the Guru's character was presented at the Emperor's court. For Aurangzeb there was no distinction between politics and religion, and one of the essential parts of the Emperor's state-policy being the conversion of the entire mass of the Hindus to his faith, the religious activities of the Guru were viewed from a different angle. This may also perhaps explain why the Muslim writers have tried to give a political colour to the Guru's religious activities, which by then had been declared to be dangerous for public peace.

Aurangzeb issued proclamations throughout the empire that the Hindus should embrace Islam, and that those who did so should receive *jagirs*, state services and all the immunities granted to royal favourites. The Emperor took the advice of his priests and all the plans suggested by them were adopted. The experiment of mass conversion was first tried in Kashmir. Macauliffe writes: "There were two reasons for this. In

the first place, the Kashmiri *Pandits* were supposed to be educated and it was thought that, if they were converted, the inhabitant of Hindustan would readily follow their example; secondly, Peshawar and Kabul, Muhammedan countries were near and if the Kashmiris offered any resistance to their conversion, the Muhammedans might declare a religious war and overpower and destroy them."¹⁵⁶ Nawab Iftikhar Khan¹⁵⁷ was appointed Governor of Kashmir in 1671 A.D. He was chosen by Aurangzeb to convert *Pandits* to Islam so that the common people might follow their example. His proselytizing activities terrified the *Pandits*. They were in search of a guide to help them. The *Pandits'* very existence was at stake. In the Punjab, Guru Hargobind alone in 600 years of Muslim rule, had provided military leadership to Hindus and Sikhs for the first time. The *Pandits* thought of waiting upon his son Guru Tegh Bahadur. A fifteen-man deputation of Kashmiri *Pandits* under Kirpa Ram Dat of Matan arrived at Anandpur on May 25, 1675 A.D.

The Guru's heart melted at their tale of woe. He became uneasy and restless at the sad plight of innocent people. At this time 8½-year old Gobind Rai appeared there. He innocently asked the cause of sadness of the Guru and the visitors. The Guru replied that the nation required a holy man to sacrifice his life. The child thoughtlessly remarked that there could be no holier person than the Guru himself. It was enough, the Guru took the child's observation as God's word. His resolve was made. He informed the *Pandits* that they should tell the Governor to convert Tegh Bahadur first and they would follow his example.

The *Pandits* went back and told the Governor who conveyed it to Aurangzeb at Hasan Abdal, situated close to the border of Kashmir. The Emperor's mind was already prejudiced against Tegh Bahadur. He hated the expression *Sachcha Padshah* used by the Sikhs for the Guru.¹⁵⁸ It implied that the Guru was a true king and the Emperor was a false king. He also detested the word Bahadur in the Guru's name as this term was reserved for nobility of the Mughal court only. The report about Guru's activities in the sis-Satluj region had exasperated him. Aurangzeb, however, was most deeply offended by the Guru's support to Kashmiri *Pandits*. The only punishment for such people was conversion or death. He knew no other course. He issued a firman to the Governor of Lahore to arrest the Guru and keep him in prison until he was called to Delhi.

The Governor of Lahore passed on a copy of the imperial firman to Abdul Aziz Dilawar Khan, Faujdar of Sarhind, with instructions to

execute the orders in such a way as not to arouse any serious alarm in the region, and to treat it as most confidential. The Faujdar instructed Nur Mohammad Khan Mirza, the Kotwal of Rupar, in whose jurisdiction Anandpur was situated, to arrest the Guru quietly and immediately send him to Sarhind.¹⁵⁹

Muhammad Ahsan Ijad¹⁶⁰ says that the order was kept secret for some time. Obviously the Kotwal was waiting for a suitable opportunity. He did not like to carry out the orders at Anandpur, where a large number of Sikhs were always present. But he had employed scouts to inform him of the Guru's daily activities and programme. It was reported to him that the Guru had decided to go on a tour about the middle of July 1675 A.D.

The Kotwal made preparations to do this job. A posse of police had been called from Sarhind to Rupar. A number of Ranghars from neighbourhood were kept ready for an emergency. The Guru accompanied by three devoted Sikhs, Mati Das, Sati Das and Dyal Das, left Anandpur on July 11, 1675 A.D. After covering about forty km. the Guru halted for the night at a Muslim village, Malakpur Rangharan, *Pargana* Ghanaula, near Rupar, and put up with his disciple named Nagahia. At about 3 o'clock next morning on July 12, the Guru and his three companions were taken prisoner and were hurriedly whisked away to Sarhind.¹⁶¹ The Guru and his party reached Sarhind under a strong guard. They were kept in prison at Basi Pathanan, and were treated as criminals. They remained there for a little less than four months.¹⁶²

The long period of Guru's imprisonment of nearly four months at Sarhind was necessitated by the fact that Aurangzeb was busy at Hasan Abdal and he wanted to come to Delhi and personally coerce the Guru to embrace Islam. He seems to have reached Delhi before the beginning of Ramzan, the fasting month of Musalmans, which commenced on November 9, 1675, A.D. On his arrival at Delhi, the Guru's presence was demanded at the capital. The *faujdar* put the Guru in an Iron cage and fastened it on the back of an elephant. His companions were fettered and handcuffed and were carried in a bullock cart to Delhi. They were strongly guarded under the personal supervision of the *faujdar* of Sarhind. They reached Delhi on November 5, 1675 A.D. They were kept in the Kotwali jail.¹⁶³

Aurangzeb had many religious disputations with Tegh Bahadur and asked him to show miracles, if he was a true Guru, or to embrace Islam.¹⁶⁴ The Guru replied that showing a miracle was to interfere in the work of God which was wholly improper. As for embracing Islam, he considered his own religion as good as Islam and, therefore, the change of religion was not necessary. The Emperor ordered that the Guru be put to the severest torture. After five days' persecution, on November 10, the most heinous and most horrible scene was enacted before the very eyes of the Guru who was kept in the iron cage. Aurangzeb thought that the sight of such ghastly deeds might force the Guru to change his mind for embracing Islam.

Mati Das, Sati Das and Dyal Das as well as the Guru were brought to the open space in front of the Kotwali where now stood a fountain. First of all Bhai Mati Das was asked to become a Musalman. He replied that Sikhism was true and Islam was false. If God had favoured Islam, He would have created all men circumcised. He was at once tied between two posts and while standing erect, was sawn across from head to loins. He faced the savage operation with such composure, tranquillity and fortitude that the Sikh theologians included his name in the daily prayer (*Ardās*) of the community. Dyal Das abused the Emperor and his courtiers for this atrocious act. He was tied up like a bundle with an iron chain and was put into a huge cauldron of boiling water. Sati Das condemned the brutalities. He was hacked to pieces limb by limb. Jaita, a Rangreta Sikh of Delhi, was also present disguised as sweeper with a broom and a basket in his hands. He collected the remains of these martyrs and consigned them to the river Yamuna flowing at a stone's throw.

Guru Tegh Bahadur saw everything happening before his eyes. He remained stonelike unruffled and undismayed. He was all the time repeating the name of God. He knew his turn was coming next. His energy, thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions had concentrated on God and a dazzling divine light was beating upon his face. He remained, as usual, peaceful and realized that such immortal sacrifices could not go in vain. Their name would live for ever. After all this, the Guru was asked either to embrace Islam or show a miracle or face death. He offered to show a miracle the following day. On November 11, 1675, at 11 o'clock in the morning was the time fixed for the Guru's performance. Keeping in mind his promise to the Kashmiri *Pandits*, the Guru continually chanted the following hymn:

Bāhen Jināhn di pakariye
Sar dije bāhen na chhoriye
Tegh Bahadur bolyā
Dhar payae dharma na chhoriye¹⁶⁵

Next morning the Guru got up early. He bathed and sat in meditation. He recited the Japji and Sukhmani. He reflected upon the supreme sacrifice of his grandfather, Guru Arjan, the duties of the office of guruship and on his own responsibility at this crisis. His resolve was made. He uttered the following hymn of his own:

Ram gio ravan gio, Jaka bahu parivar
Kahu Nanak kish thir nahin, Sapne jio Sansar.¹⁶⁶

A little before 11 o'clock Guru Tegh Bahadur was brought to the open place of execution in Chandni Chowk, where now stands Gurudwara Sis Ganj. The Qazi, several high officials and the executioner, Sayyid Jalal-ud-din of Samana with a shining broad sword in hand, were already there. A contingent of Mughal soldiers stood on guard. A large crowd of spectators had gathered outside the barricade. The Guru stood in front. The Qazi asked him either to show a miracle, or embrace Islam, or face death. Syed Muhammad Latif says that the Guru expressed his readiness to show a miracle in proof of the alleged divinity of his mission. He wrote on a piece of paper which he said was charmed and then having tied it round his neck declared that the sword would fall harmless on it by the effect of the charm which was written upon it. The executioner was then summoned to test the miraculous charm. The blow was given and the head of the Guru rolled on the floor to the amazement of all present there. The paper was then read and it contained these words, "Sar dia, Sirar na dia", meaning that he had given his head but not his resolve.¹⁶⁷

After the execution, Guru's head and body were placed on the back of an elephant and paraded in the streets and bazaars of Delhi. They were kept at the Kotwali in Chandni Chowk after demonstration. Aurangzeb then ordered that parts of his body be amputated and hung about the city.¹⁶⁸ Nanu and Jaita, resident of Dilwali Gali in the city, held a meeting in the house of Nanu. They were joined by Uda, a resident of Ladwa in Karnal district, who was staying with Nanu. They resolved that such a thing should not be allowed to happen. It was suggested that Lakhi Lubana was shortly to arrive with a few cartloads of cotton from Narnaul. He was a Sikh and his guidance should be sought. They waited

for Lakhi on the road a few kilometres away from the city. They informed him about the whole affair. It was decided that the carts should be diverted from the side of the Red Fort to Chandni Chowk about midnight. On November 11, it was Thursday and the fifth day of the moonlight. It meant the moon would set by 8 o'clock and afterwards there would be pitchdark. Near Kotwali the speed of the carts would be slowed down without stopping them. The head and body lay at the gate. The watchmen wrapped in quilts were inside. Jaita slipped out quietly, picked up the head and fled away towards Subzi Mandi. He tied the head in a sheet, fastened it on his back and covered his body in an old dirty blanket. He made straight for Azadpur on the road to Sonapat. Nanu and Uda served as his escorts. One walked ahead and the other behind within sight of Jaita. They followed the paths through fields and bushes. From Karnal they took the Pathway to Pehowa, Ismailabad and Ambala. They reached Kiratpur in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 16, 1675 A.D. Guru Gobind Rai was immediately informed at Anandpur, at a distance of 8 km. He at once came to Kiratpur and accorded a ceremonial reception to his father's head. He held Jaita in a tight embrace declaring 'Rangrete Guru ke bete'. The Guru bestowed the same affection and honour on Nanu and Uda.¹⁶⁹

Gobind Rai performed the ceremonial cremation of the head on November 17 at a place where now stands Gurudwara Sis Ganj [Anandpur Sahib]. After the creation of the *Khalsa*, Jaita was baptized by Guru Gobind Singh and was named Jiwan Singh. He was killed in the battle of Chamkaur in 1704 A.D.¹⁷⁰ Lakhi's son and a servant lifted the body, hid it in cotton and rushed off to Raisina and to their home in Rakabganj village inhabited by *Bagaris* whose profession was to make stirrups of saddles, in great demand in those days. He put the body at a suitable place and piled all the wood, wooden articles, clothes, ghee available in the house, heaped up cotton on it and then set fire to the house to avoid detection.¹⁷¹

In the morning the entire staff at Kotwali was horrified at the disappearance of Guru's head and body. The police was immediately put on the alert, and a thorough search was made everywhere. Some horsemen rushed along the road to Sonapat, making enquiries from passers by. Another posse of policemen hurried to Rakabganj. They found Lakhi's house reduced to ashes and inmates bewailing and crying. After two days the Guru's ashes were collected. They were put in a bronze pot, and buried underground, at that very spot, Gurudwara Rakabganj marks this site.¹⁷²

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is a great landmark in Sikh history. "His execution," says G.C. Narang, "was universally regarded by the Hindus as a sacrifice for their faith. The whole Punjab began to burn with indignation and revenge. The sturdy jats of Majhā and Malwa only wanted a leader under whose banner they could fight and avenge the insult done to their religion. This leader they found in the youthful Gobind."¹⁷³ The Sikhs and their leader, the youthful Gobind, finally decided to carry the policy and programme of Guru Hargobind to its logical conclusion, i.e., to convert the peaceful sect of devotees into a well-disciplined and well-organised military order.

The Hindus, Sikhs and Sufi Muslims in the Punjab were deeply shocked at the execution of the Guru and his three brave companions. They were filled with indignation. A Sikh even made an attempt on Aurangzeb's life. On Friday, October 27, 1676, the Emperor returned from Jama Masjid. He went for an airing in a boat in river Yamuna. When he alighted the boat and was about to get on the movable throne (takht-e-rawān) "an ill-fated disciple of Guru Tegh Bahadur" threw two bricks at the Emperor, one of which hit the throne.¹⁷⁴

Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution turned the tide of history of the Sikhs. His son and successor Guru Gobind Singh, reflected on the history of India as well as on the history of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak had described the rulers of his time as tigers and dogs. His great-grandfather, the fifth Guru, Arjan, was executed at Lahore. His grandfather, the sixth Guru, Hargobind, had been imprisoned in the Gwalior fort for some time. His father was beheaded simply because he happened to be the head of a religious body. There had been no change in the attitude of rulers as described by Guru Nanak even after two hundred years. After a most determined meditation on this state of affairs, the Guru came to the conclusion that if the king was bad, people must rise in revolt and follow the example of Shivaji (1628-1680 A.D.). The greatest need of the time was to create a national army. Such an army was to be based on social justice. There should be no discrimination in the name of caste, creed or colour. The unpaid, unequipped and untrained army was to be inspired with the feelings of patriotism and nationalism. He knew that human mind with such inspiration was capable of rising to the loftiest heights and under proper guidance could work wonders. This objective was achieved by his creation of the *Khalsa*. Under the direction of the Guru, the *Khalsa* took up the profession of arms. The down-trodden who had lived for centuries under complete servility turned into doughty warriors. In the course of one hundred years they not only ended the

foreign rule but also put a stop forever to the foreign invasions from the north-west.

Dr. Gokul Chand Narang says that in his death, Guru Tegh Bahadur surpassed anything that he had done during his life time. He was known throughout northern India, was highly revered by Rajput princes and was actually worshipped by the peasantry of the Punjab. He was generally looked upon as a champion of the Hindus. Moreover, as a result of this sacrifice, the Hindu religion was saved. Latif writes: "When the courtiers, tinged with superstition, saw what had occurred, they were struck with horror and surprise. The Emperor himself was disgusted and displeased, and ordered the crowd to be dispersed."¹⁷⁵ He was convinced that it was no more possible to convert the entire mass of Hindus into Islam.

Guru Gobind Singh wrote in his *Bichitra Natak* thus:

He protected the frontal marks and sacrificial thread of the
Hindus.

And displayed great bravery in this *kal* age.

When he put an end to his life for the sake of holy men

He gave his head, but uttered not a groan

.... ..

Having broken his potsherd on the head of the king of Delhi
he departed to paradise

No one else coming into the world acted like Teg Bahadur.

.... ..

The world was in mourning at the demise of Teg Bahadur,

There was weeping for him in the whole world,

but rejoicing in paradise.¹⁷⁶

With the tragic death of such a saintly figure as Guru Tegh Bahadur, all the Hindus of the Punjab were stirred to their very depth and they took a vow not to submit to the tyranny of the Mughals and fight them to the last to save their honour and religion. Thus, a great storm broke out in the Punjab after the death of the martyr Guru and this storm blew off the empire of Aurangzeb, as if it were a dead leaf lying on the road.

The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, according to Gordon, sowed dragon-teeth in Delhi, which soon brought its harvest.¹⁷⁷ Besides, the sacrifice was bound to have a far-reaching effect on the character of the Sikhs. Just as after the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind had

to have a resort to sword and army, after the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, his successor Guru Gobind Singh had to appeal to arms, but this time resulting into consequences simply unique. After the Guru had been executed, not a Sikh in Delhi dared to come forward and take away his body for cremation, because of the fear of arrest and similar treatment. Only under the cover of late stormy night Bhai Jaita, a Sikh of low caste, removed the Guru's head which was taken away to Anandpur by him, and a Lubana, Lakhi Shah, removed the Guru's body for cremation. It was an eye-opener, indeed, to Guru Gobind Singh who is said to have taken a decision forthwith to give to his Sikhs such shape and form as would help none of them henceforth to conceal himself and yet call himself a Sikh only when the circumstances favoured it. It was as a result of this resolve that the militant *Khalsa* took birth, with five of their own symbols to distinguish them from the rest of the humanity.

It was as a result of this martyrdom that Guru Gobind Singh started maintaining a huge army once again and fought battles with the tyrants. The reaction continued in the shape of Banda Bahadur's valiant marches against the corrupt Muslim rulers in the Punjab. It continued later in the rise of different Sikh *Misils* and then ended ultimately in Ranjit Singh's raising a Sikh standard of monarchy and in the consolidation of the Sikhs into a distinct nation itself.

GURU GOBIND SINGH AND AURANGZEB (1675 A.D.—1707 A.D.)

Guru Gobind Singh was only nine years old when his father was tortured and executed by the bigoted Emperor, Aurangzeb. His first thought, naturally was to avenge his father's tragic death. However, it was not yet possible for Guru Gobind to organise active resistance against the Mughal tyrant. First, he himself was a boy, and so felt a natural handicap in leading his men and declaring an open war against one of the great empires of the world of those times. Secondly, his brethren, the Hindus, on account of centuries of alien rule and the caste or class prejudices, had become so weak and submissive that they would not take up arms to fight the alien tyranny. Thirdly, his followers, the Sikhs, too, had been so much overawed by the oppressive bigotry of Aurangzeb that at the time of the martyrdom of his father, most of them had left him and fled to the place of safety in the hills. Besides, there were a number of sub-sects among the Sikhs, mostly comprising the descendants of the previous Gurus whose claims to the Guru had been superseded; and these sub-sects were looking forward to an opportunity

to overthrow the child Guru and usurp all powers in their hands. The important groups among them were *Minas*, *Dhirmalias* and *Ram Raeyyas*.

The Guru was a mere boy but the problems he was called upon to face were enormous. The policy of comparative peace which his immediate predecessors had followed, had brought about simply catastrophic results. The strong proselytizing attitude of the state exhibited during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign had slackened to certain extent, temples still continued to be razed to the ground and the sacred threads of the Hindus continued to be broken. And the tragedy is that "although the masses of the Hindus were bitter against the galling yoke of tyranny, the so-called natural leaders of the people were most officially loyal to the throne and most bitterly hostile to all progressive movements".¹⁷⁸ The petty hill states which were supposed to be the strongholds of the Hindus, were most averse to any change in their age-old practices and to the recognition of the exigencies of the time. They were loyal to the Mughals, looked upon the lower classes with disdain, and were first class idolaters; while these were precisely the things to which the Sikh Gurus were most opposed. The Hill Rajas such as Bhim Chand and Hari Chand are said to have threatened even Guru Tegh Bahadur for his beliefs. A great number of the followers of the Sikh faith were Jats who were looked down upon by these chiefs and, therefore, the Gurus were supposed to be the leaders of only low caste Hindus and hence to be despised. Punjab being the first to come under the Muslim yoke, here the Muslim population was proportionately larger than in any other part of the country and, therefore, less easy to contend with. The Governors of the Punjab were to a certain extent free from Delhi, more fanatic and, therefore, less likely to put up with the movements such as the Sikhism was. They, on the other hand, are said to have incited the Hill Rajas against the Guru, telling them that the successors of Guru Nanak had fallen from the essential philosophy preached by him, and degenerated into aspirants of political power.

Besides, the Sikh organisation itself had by now fallen into the hands of loose-thinking self-seekers. Guru Har Rai had died in the prime of his youth. Guru Har Krishan was a mere child to think seriously of bringing the house to order. Guru Tegh Bahadur was too old and too much preoccupied in other things to plan seriously a renovation of the entire system. The *masands* had gone corrupt and began to feel themselves powerful enough to make or unmake a Guru. They used to boast that the Guru was of their own making, and if they did not serve him, no one would even look at him. They practised oppression in every form; they

embezzled offerings made to the Guru and committed many other enormities.

Majority of the Guru's followers were poor and, therefore, offered not very good source of steady income. The Sikh army organised by Guru Hargobind had been dispersed and his victories in the battlefield now went rather against Guru Gobind Singh in the Mughal court. As a result of the policy of peace followed by the successors of Guru Hargobind, the Sikhs were falling behind in the military practices and it was a problem to reorganise them to the martial tune.

But, despite these difficulties, the Guru was determined to take steps to avenge his father's death and also to inspire his countrymen to rise and resist the tyranny of the Mughals. Thus, there were two powerful impulses which made him an irreconcilable foe of the Mughals. One, the impulse of avenging his own wrongs, i.e., his father's unjust execution and the other, to avenge his country's wrongs. With this clear-cut goal before him, he resolved upon awakening his followers to a new life, and finally decided that his Sikhs or devotees should also be taught to wield the sword to defend themselves, their religion, and their country.

Thus Gobind Singh was not destined to have peace in his life time. He was born in conflict. He was brought up in conflict. He lived in conflict and he died in conflict. This conflict was not of his own making. It was an age of conflict. Conflict was thrust upon him by the force of circumstances, and he had full measure of it. It was a holy conflict. He aimed at regenerating a decaying people. He endeavoured to create a new nation. He planned to lay the foundation of a new society based upon justice and freedom of conscience. He designed to promulgate the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.¹⁷⁹

At the age of nine Gobind Singh experienced his father's sacrifice in the cause of religious freedom. Between the age of nine and thirty-nine, in thirty years, he had to fight as many as twenty battles, nine before the creation of the *Khalsa* and eleven afterwards. He had enemies all around. He had little resources in men, money and material. Within a week in December 1705, A.D., he laid at the altar his mother and all four of his sons. Besides, thousands of his devoted followers were launched into eternity. Eventually at the young age of forty-two he shuffled off this mortal coil in the cause of freedom and in the service of humanity. Can there be a greater and nobler sacrifice than this? The legacy left behind by him was that of sacrifice, service, self-support and self-respect. Bulleh

Shah, a celebrated Sufi Muslim saint of Punjab was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. He pays a glowing tribute to the Guru thus: I neither say of the past, nor do I speak of the future; but I talk of the time of Guru Gobind Singh and declare openly that but for him all the Hindus could have been converted to a foreign culture and religion.¹⁸⁰

There, however, also existed some factors which went in his favour. The movement which had been founded by Baba Nanak, had by this time developed into the creation of a separate sect with its own language and scripture, with its separate beliefs and practices and separate centres of pilgrimage and sources of spiritual and cultural enlightenment. This new sect also had developed, by the time of the tenth Guru, a sufficiently strong tradition of valour and sacrifice. And for the Guru, such a past "was not a mean asset in the glorious career upon which he was about to enter".¹⁸¹

The policy of non-violence had failed. After violence in the time of Guru Hargobind, non-violence had been tried fully in the time of his successors again. The sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur itself promised no lasting escape from theocratic tyranny. The silent sufferings and the sacrifice of the ninth Guru had changed the atmosphere. It had shaken some Hindu thinking minds from their age-old slumber and they were now willing to be organised for the protection of their honour and self-respect. Among the Muslims themselves now a sort of definite division seemed to have been created. Many remained fanatic with their proselytizing zeal, specially so among the ruling classes; but among the general mass of the people a process of re-examining the persecuting behaviour had commenced.

Aurangzeb, too, was at this time busy in Deccan and had "left the Punjab free for any enterprising spirit to mature plans".¹⁸² In the south Shivaji had succeeded and had crowned himself as a king at Raigarh in 1674 A.D. Jats near Delhi, though once beaten by the imperial forces, were continuing their resistance. The tribesmen in the north-west frontiers were raising their head and threatening peace in the adjoining territories. There were disorderly elements in Bengal and pirates along the Bengal coast had been keeping the Bengal Governor, Shayista Khan, busy since long. About a hundred miles south-west of Delhi, the Satnamis were organising themselves to make the Mughal life difficult: the Mughals were in fact on a waning glory.

Nor had the destructive religious zeal exhibited by Aurangzeb been

applauded by all the sections of the Muslim society abroad. The religious policy followed by Aurangzeb in India was considered anti-Islamic by the *Khalifa* at Mecca who refused to receive an ambassador from the Emperor. Shah Abbas of Iran hated the religious policy of Aurangzeb likewise. And in India, too, there were not a few well-meaning Muslims who considered him to be a misled compatriot. Some Muslims such as Pir Budhu Shah openly sided with the Guru and gave him every assistance, material as well as physical, in the realisation of his aim. And not a few of the Muslims enlisted themselves in the Guru's army to fight for his cause.

The Mughal army itself were getting demoralised. Its soldiers, ill-paid mercenaries, had lost their old zeal and strength, and many had deserted it in the thick of the troubles. Quite a few of them later offered themselves to fight for the Guru. Such was the state of things when Guru Tegh Bahadur broke his potsherd on the head of Aurangzeb in Delhi, and when Gobind Rai became a young Guru. The best recruits to the Sikh faith were the Jats of Majha and Malwa. Their character was martial, and they were great lovers of freedom. The greatest testimony to the constructive genius of the Guru would be only if he could seize what was vital in the situation and, as Cunningham writes, relume it with Promethean fire.¹⁸³ The Sikhs gave the Guru the ideal, the material, and combining the two, the Guru actually forged, a dynamic force, which none could henceforward ignore."¹⁸⁴

Indubhushan Banerjee divides the career of Guru Gobind from the period of his installation on the *Gaddi* to his death into two distinct periods:

1. The *pre-Khalsa* period which extended from 1675 to 1699 A.D.; and
2. The *post-Khalsa* period from 1699 A.D. till his death which occurred in 1708 A.D.

FIRST PERIOD (1675 A.D.—1699 A.D.)

Conflict with Kahlur

Anandpur was situated in the state of Kahlur, later called Bilaspur. Bhim Chand (1667-1712 A.D.) was its ruler. There were several causes of friction between the Raja and the Guru. Bhim Chand did not like the large Sikh gatherings and their warlike activities in the vicinity of his

capital. His headquarters at Kot Kahlur stood fifteen kilometres from Anandpur on the Naina Devi range at the north-western end.

A huge kettle-drum called *Ranjit Nagara* was installed at the gate of Gobind's residence. It was beaten regularly every morning and evening as a symbol of sovereignty and it echoed for miles around. The Raja objected to this practice. He declared that it was the privilege of the ruler alone. The young Guru paid no heed to his protest.¹⁸⁵

Meanwhile, a prince of Assam, Raja Rattan Rai, whose parents had met Guru Tegh Bahadur and had sought his blessings for the birth of a son, came to Anandpur in fulfilment of his father's vow. He presented Gobind a baby-elephant, named Prasadi. The young elephant had been trained to perform various acts of service and devotion. He held a jug of water, washed the Guru's feet and then dried them with a towel. He wiped the Guru's shoes and arranged them properly for him to put on. He fetched an arrow discharged by Guru Gobind. He waved peacock feathers in a knot over the Guru. At night he held two lighted torches and showed the way to Guru Gobind. It was black as a coal, had a beautiful white stripe stretching from the tip of his trunk, along the forehead and back right up to the tip of its tail. Its fame spread far and wide and many people came to see it.¹⁸⁶ The possession of an elephant was another symbol of sovereignty and it considerably enhanced Guru Gobind's prestige.

Other costly presents or offerings to the Guru from Raja Ratan Rai were five horses with golden trappings, a weapon out of which five sorts of arms could be made, first a pistol, then by pressing a batton a sword, then a lance, then a dagger and finally a club. A throne from which, by pressing a button, puppets emerged and played *chauper* and, a drinking cup of great value and several costly and beautiful jewels and raiment.¹⁸⁷

About the same time a Sikh from Kabul named Duni Chand brought as his offering a costly tent to be used by Guru Gobind for holding a durbar. It was made of the finest silk fabrics having numerous pictures woven on it in threads of gold and strings of pearls hanging all around. The flooring was covered with lovely Persian carpets.

All this touched the pride of Bhim Chand. He could not tolerate a sovereign state springing up within his state. Besides, the Mughal Governors of Sarhind, Lahore, and Jammu, incited the Raja of Kahlur to

nip the rising power of Gobind in the bud. They also frightened him of the wrath of the Emperor if the Guru was allowed to gain power.¹⁸⁸

First Battle of Anandpur (1682 A.D.)

Bhim Chand decided to assert his authority over the Guru. He demanded the elephant and the tent on loan for a few days on the occasion of the betrothal of his son. His real intention was never to return them back. Guru Gobind knew it and put off the Raja's agent on the plea that the donors had forbidden their lending to anyone else. Bhim Chand led an expedition against Anandpur, but he was beaten off. This took place in 1682 A.D. when Guru Gobind was hardly sixteen years of age.¹⁸⁹

Second Battle of Anandpur (1685 A.D.)

Relations between Guru Gobind and Bhim Chand of Kahlur remained tense. Skirmishes frequently occurred between the two parties. Intrigues were going on to uproot the Guru from Anandpur and break his power. Bhim Chand formed an alliance with the Rajas of Kangra and Guler. The allies attacked Anandpur in the beginning of 1685 A.D. but were repulsed.¹⁹⁰

Raja Medni Prakash was quite friendly with the Guru. Cordial relations had existed between the Gurus and rulers of Sirmaur state since the time of Guru Har Rai who had lived at Nahan for twelve years. Raja Medni Prakash (1684 A.D. to 1704 A.D.) knew of the feud existing between Anandpur and Kahlur. He invited the Guru to settle down in his state. The Guru was unwilling to leave Anandpur, but he was persuaded by his mother to accept the invitation because a couple of skirmishes had already taken place between the Raja and the Guru and a big battle was expected at any time. The Guru's mother and maternal uncle, Kripal Chand, wanted to avoid it.

The Guru was duly greeted by Raja Medni Prakash and here again the Guru busied himself with hunting and other such activities. It is said that once when the Raja went with the Guru on a hunting excursion, he told him that Fateh Shah had often quarrelled with him on the ground where they stood and requested the Guru to build there a fort for the protection of the state. The Guru accepted the proposal, the foundations of the fort were duly laid and in due time the fort was ready, which was named Paunta. The Guru stayed there and continued to strengthen his

army and enlist Muhammedans as well as the Hindus who presented themselves for his service.

At Paunta, the young Gobind began to think about the sins and sufferings of his countrymen. He felt that they were the victims of two types of tyranny. First, the political tyranny of the alien rulers who would not grant them even the elementary rights of citizenship—freedom of religion and security of life, honour and prosperity. Secondly, the centuries old religious tyranny of the priestly class, the Brahmins who, through a religion of empty rituals, had been exploiting the ignorant and superstitious Hindus to their advantage. A writer has rightly observed: "The political tyranny was discriminate and occasional, but the religious tyranny was indiscriminate and continuous, being practised every day in kitchen, at village wells, in temples, and hundreds of other places of mutual resort."¹⁹¹ The Guru, therefore, decided to give a bold and determined fight to both the religious and the political tyranny. As a first step to achieve this, he tried to acquaint and equip himself with every branch of knowledge. He went through the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and gained a good deal of knowledge from the incidents and stories of those great epics. He even got translated some of the portions of these great works into Hindi and Gurmukhi in order to foster a new spirit of self-reliance among his followers and thus "to steel their hearts against injustice and tyranny". In this great literary programme, the Guru was assisted by as many as fifty-two poets of great eminence. It was in the course of these literary pursuits that Guru Gobind Singh had "developed a style which, for martial cadence, variety of forms and richness of imagination, has remained unsurpassed since his times".

Besides awakening his men through literature, Guru Gobind Singh began to exhort them to pay proper attention to their bodies. They were asked to take active interest in all kinds of sports and it is said that he began to train them in riding, archery and sword-play. He also enlisted some Pathan mercenaries in his army to increase his strength and also to give his followers further training in the methods of warfare. Arms, horses and money were pouring in from all sides. One Sikh presented one hundred horses which he had purchased in Kashmir.¹⁹² Youngmen of dash and daring were retained in attendance. Five Pathan Sardars of village Damala in Tahsil Jagadhri of Ambala district, not far from Paunta, were out of job. Their names were Kale Khan, Najabat Khan, Bhikhan Khan, Hayat Khan and Umar Khan. They were great warriors. Five hundred Pathan soldiers were with them. All of them were disciples of

Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura.¹⁹³ They were in search of employment. The Pir took them to the Guru. On the recommendation of the Pir, the Guru took them in his service. Each Sardar was paid Rs. 5 daily and each soldier one rupee.¹⁹⁴ They trained Sikh soldiers.

The Battle of Bhangani (April 16, 1689 A.D.)¹⁹⁵

These warlike activities alarmed the hill Rajas. They were frightened of the growing power and popularity of Guru Gobind. The overwhelming number of his low-caste followers was a threat to their deep rooted caste prejudices. Further, the democratic spirit among the Sikhs were opposed to the feudal system and divine right of rulers in the area. The taking as wives of pretty hill girls by Sikhs and Pathans was highly objectionable to them. They also felt that the Guru was trying to establish a virtual principality amid mountain fastnesses to serve as the base of his operations against the Mughal government. They were also under instruction from Delhi to crush the Guru.¹⁹⁶

But the immediate reason was something else. The son of Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur was to marry the daughter of Fateh Shah, the Raja of Garhwal. The direct and shortest route to Srinagar from Kahlur passed over the river Yamuna near Paunta. The marriage party accompanied by a strong contingent of troops proceeded thither. Bhim Chand remained in the rear as he did not like to meet the Guru. His son Ajmer Chand, the bridegroom, with Wazir Parma Nand and the troops reached the ferry on the Yamuna. Their passage was obstructed by the Sikhs. Parma Nand waited on the Guru. The bridegroom's party with a small escort was allowed to pass, while the main body was turned away. Bhim Chand took a longer route. The Guru's earlier defiances at Anandpur coupled with that at Paunta, invited Bhim Chand's wrath on Guru Gobind.¹⁹⁷

Guru Gobind was also invited by Fateh Shah on the marriage. Guru himself did not go to Srinagar, but he sent a present of one lakh and a quarter through *Pandit* Daya Ram under escort of Diwan Nand Chand with 200 chosen horsemen. At the time of marriage Fateh Shah's priest announced Guru's gift for the bride. Bhim Chand was red with rage. He declared outright rejection of Guru's present and expulsion of his men would enable him to have the nuptial ceremony performed, otherwise he would immediately turn back without the bride.

The situation became tense. Fateh Shah was forced to yield. The Guru says that Raja Fateh Shah got angry with him and the battle was

thrust upon him without any reason.¹⁹⁸ Bhim Chand planned to plunder the party and kill all the Sikhs. Nand Chand got the hint. He took possession of his gifts and fled away. Bhim Chand said the Sikhs had robbed them of both dowry presents and honour. This was an insult not only to him but to all the Rajas present there. The Guru was an enemy of their religion as he was opposed to idol worship. He persuaded Fateh Shah to lead an assault on the Guru in the company of all the Rajas. The bride and bridegroom, under a suitable escort were sent straight to Kahlur. All others got ready for the battle. It also appears likely that the Delhi government had incited the hill Rajas to crush the Guru. The hill Rajas who were present there and who assented to attack the Guru were the following: Fateh Shah of Garhwal, Bhim Chand of Bilaspur, Kripal Chand of Kangra, Sidhsen of Mandi, Gopal Chand of Guler, Hari Chand of Hindur, Kesari Chand Jaspal, Umed Singh of Jaswan, Dayal Chand of Kotgarh, Karam Chand of Bharmaur, Daya Singh of Nurpur, Gurbhaji Singh of Indaurah, Bhag Singh of Talokpur, Hari Chand of Kotiwal and Lachhu Chand of Kotkhai. Raja Medni Prakash of Sirmour remained neutral, though the battle was to be fought in his territory.

On the other hand, when the Guru got the intelligence regarding such developments, he intensified his preparations. Of the 500 Pathans enlisted by Pir Budhu Shah in the Guru's army, 400 deserted him. Only Kale Khan with 100 Pathans under his command remained loyal. The 400 Pathans joined the already large army of the Hill Rajas and encouraged these chiefs by saying: "The Guru's main dependence is on us. The rest of his army is a miscellaneous rabble who have never seen war, and will run away when they hear the first shot fired." They joined the Hill Rajas' army without pay with a promise that they would be permitted to plunder the riches of the Guru. The *Udasis* also fled, hearing of the approaching war. Only one of them, Mahant Kirpal Das, remained with the Guru. Budhu Shah was immediately informed of the misconduct of the Pathans who, to wipe away this disgrace, placed himself, his brother, his four sons and 700 disciples at the Guru's disposal. The Guru selected Bhangani, six miles from Paunta, as the battlefield and marched his forces thither. The enemy crossed the Yamuna a few kilometres above Paunta. The Guru took up his position on a hillock. The hill troops occupied the plains below. The fighting was tough and hard. The Guru gave a vivid description of the battle, several skirmishes and the duels. In an engagement the Guru's horse was killed by an arrow of Hari Chand of Hindur. Another arrow grazed his ear, while the third penetrated the buckle of his waist belt and pricked his body. The Guru's general and cousin Sango Shah, with his four brothers,

Jitmal, Gulab Rae, Sangat Rae and Hari Chand, all of whom were the sons of Bibi Viro, daughter of Guru Har Gobind, fought hard. Sango Shah killed Najabat Khan. Pir Budhu Shah's two sons and Sango Shah were killed. On the side of the Hill Rajas, Hari Chand of Hindur was killed by the Guru. Fateh Shah and Bhim Chand took to flight. The *Udasi* saint Kirpal Das killed Hayat Khan. Rama carpenter of Chandalgarh had prepared two guns in the hollow trunks of two *imli* trees (*tamarindus indicus*). Their smoke and dust of the earth created darkness and enabled Guru's men to fall upon the enemy. Mulchand, a confectioner in Guru's camp, fought bravely.¹⁹⁹

In his autobiography (*Bichitra Natak*) the Guru has given a graphic description of the battle. He described how he himself led his forces and killed the two great generals of the enemies, namely, Bhikan Khan and Hari Chand. With the death of their generals, the army of the hill chiefs lost heart and began to retreat. This battle was fought for about nine hours. By nightfall the enemy troops were nowhere to be seen. The Guru's Sikhs had done a good job. They had displayed great skill in the use of sabres, slashing, slaughtering and shooting. The bodies on both sides were thrown into the river. The wounded were taken care of. With the beat of drum the victorious Guru returned to Paunta. Pir Budhu Shah was granted a robe of honour.

The victory in this battle instilled a great hope and confidence among his followers. It convinced them that, if properly organised and trained, they would be able to fight successfully against every type of tyranny. The Guru thereafter decided to leave his hilly retreat of Paunta and again returned to Kahlur where he settled at Anandpur. Besides, the tough fight that the Guru had given at Bhangani made a deep impression upon the Hill Rajas and they now began to regard the Guru's power with the seriousness it deserved.

The Guru had won a great victory, yet he did not acquire an inch of land or subdue a state, exterminate its authorities and establish a political power. This disinterestedness of the Guru spread his fame far and wide and people flocked around him in ever greater number. The Guru's arms supply increased and a large number of people offered themselves to be enrolled in the Guru's army.

The battle of Bhangani is said to be an event which set the events rolling towards a major clash between the Guru and the Mughals. The Mughals had thought the Guru would be destroyed in his clash with the

hill Rajas and, according to some accounts, they had encouraged these chiefs towards that direction. But this battle convinced them that the Guru was becoming too formidable a power. They lost their confidence in the hill Rajas as a weapon against the Guru, and it was doubtful if these chiefs would now occupy the same privileged position in the Mughal eyes as before. The politics which emerged as a result of this battle was, therefore, confused. And the hill Rajas proved to be perfectly immature politicians, buffeted about like pebbles on the sea shore, sometimes aligning themselves with this power and sometimes with that. So it exposed the hollowness of the prowess of the hill Rajas. It convinced the hill Rajas that they could not evict the Guru from Anandpur without the support of the Mughal government. Thus, it paved the way for Mughal-Sikh conflict.

The Battle of Nadaun (1690 A.D.)

Guru Gobind, immediately after the victory of Bhangani, left Paunta and again shifted to the territory of Kahlur chief. He was confident that in case of further trials of strength by Bhim Chand he would be able to hold his own. The Guru was in the habit of taking quick decisions and executing them instantly.

The Guru's arrival at Anandpur did not disturb the equanimity of the Rajas of Kangra hills. Finding Aurangzeb too heavily involved in the Deccan, the Rajas wished to stop payment of their tribute. A coalition was formed under the leadership of Bhim Chand. His allies were Gopal Chand of Guler, Ram Singh of Jaswan, Prithvi Chand Dadwal, Kesari Chand Jaswal and Sukhdev of Jasrota. Guru Gobind Singh won over to their side. Forster says that on his return, the Guru "was hospitably received by a marauding Hindoo chief of that quarter."²⁰⁰ To avoid listening to the beating of Guru's drum and to be farther away from the Sikhs and the Mughals, Bhim Chand shifted his capital into the interior on the left bank of the river Satluj, 2000 feet above sea level. He named it Vyaspur after the name of the famous saint Vyas or Bias. It became corrupted into Bilaspur. The state also came to be known by the same name.

The Kangra hills were under the charge of the governor of Jammu. At this time Mian Khan held this post. He despatched a force under Alif Khan in 1690. He took up position at Nadaun on the banks of river Beas, 32 kilometres south-east of Kangra. Raja Kirpal Chand of Kangra and Raja Dayal of Bijharwal joined Alif Khan. After a hard battle, the allies

were successful and Alif Khan took to flight leaving behind all his baggage. The Guru stayed here for eight days and visited various places there. Meanwhile Bhim Chand made peace with Kripal Chand of Kangra without consulting the Guru and agreed to pay tribute to the Mughal court. The Guru left for Anandpur in disgust. On the way, Sikhs plundered Alsun because the inhabitants had refused to sell supplies to them.²⁰¹ According to Giani Gian Singh, the inhabitants of Alsun had thrice before looted the Sikhs and now again insulted some of them which resulted in their being plundered.

Rustam Khan's Expedition against the Guru (1691 A.D.)

After repulsing Alif Khan and the submission of hill Rajas, Mian Khan, the Governor of Jammu, urged the Governor of Lahore to take suitable action against the Guru who alone remained defiant in the region. His deputy Dilawar Khan²⁰² sent a force under his son Rustam Khan. The expedition seems to have been organised in the winter of 1691 A.D. The young man wanted to take Anandpur by surprise. He arrived at night opposite Anandpur and encamped in the bed of a dry *nullah*. By chance it rained heavily and the rivulet was flooded. Many of his men and most of his baggage were carried away. The Guru called it *Himayati Nullah* or friendly rivulet.²⁰³

The Guru's drum was beaten at 3 o'clock in the morning to awaken the Sikhs so that they were ready for prayer by 4 o'clock. Many Sikhs were in the habit of having a dip in the river Satluj, which then flowed one km away. They saw a concentration of Mughal troops. They rushed back to inform the Guru. He lost no time in reaching the spot at the head of a strong force. The Sikhs launched a severe attack on the enemy. There was bitter fighting. The guns on both sides played havoc. On account of extreme cold and the sudden attack, the Mughal soldiers could not hold their ground and fled away, leaving behind their weapons. On their way back they plundered and laid waste the village Barwa in Thana Nurpur, tehsil and district Una, and encamped at village Bhalan in the same police station.²⁰⁴

The Expedition of Hussain Khan (1693 A.D.)

Soon Rustam Khan returned home and hung his head in shame. Thereupon Hussain, a slave of Dilawar Khan, offered to march against the Guru. So Dilawar Khan despatched a stronger expedition under Hussain Khan in the beginning of 1693 A.D. The Mughal general

expected a long siege of Anandpur. For that purpose he needed ready money. In internal expeditions the general rule was that war victims must be made to pay for war. Hussain Khan also wished to secure his rear in order to maintain a constant source of supplies. These objectives involved him inextricably with the hill chiefs. On the way he defeated Madhukar Shah, the Raja of Dadwal, and took his sons prisoners. He plundered the countryside in the neighbourhood unopposed. Kripal Chand Katoch of Kangra and Bhim Chand of Bilaspur submitted to him without offering any resistance. Their example was followed by Raja Gopal of Guler and Raja Ram Singh of Jaswan. Hussain Khan demanded money from the Rajas in order to subdue the Guru. They offered him certain amounts which were considered too small. The Raja of Guler had brought Rs. 4000 instead of Rs. 10,000 claimed from him. Being publicly insulted, the Raja fled back along with the money he had brought. Raja Gopal's fort was besieged.

By this time Guru had sent his agent named Sangat Rae to help Raja Gopal in negotiations. At his suggestion and on Hussain Khan's assurance of safety, Raja Gopal Chand visited Hussain Khan. Kripal Chand Katoch was his enemy. He prevailed upon Hussain Khan to take him prisoner. Raja Gopal managed to flee. A bloody battle was fought. On one side were Hussain Khan, Kripal Katoch, Bhim Chand, Himmat Singh and Hari Singh. Raja Gopal was helped by Guru's commanders Lal Chand, Ganga Ram, Kripa Ram and Agri Singh Brar with 300 select soldiers, and Raja Ram Singh of Jaswan. In the action Hussain Khan, Kripal Katoch and Himmat Singh were killed. Agri Singh and Sangat Rae with seven Sikhs also perished. Gopal made large offerings to the Guru who remained safe as Anandpur was not attacked. The Guru calls it the Husaini battle in *Bichitra Natak*. The Guru writes: "Gopal was victorious and the battle came to an end. Everybody then went home and the rain of bullets that was originally intended for me, was showered by the Almighty elsewhere."²⁰⁵

Battles between 1694-96 A.D.

On November 20, 1693, A.D., Aurangzeb was informed that Guru Gobind had been creating trouble in the province of Sarhind and that local authorities had failed to subdue him. Aurangzeb issued orders to his Governors of Delhi, Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu to stop the Guru from collecting Sikhs at Anandpur. A newsletter stated: "News from Sarhind. Gobind declares himself to be Guru Nanak. Faujdars ordered to prevent him from assemblage."²⁰⁶ A special order was issued to the

Governor of Sarhind "to admonish Gobind, son of Tegh Bahadur"²⁰⁷ As a consequence, a number of expeditions were planned between 1694 and 1696 A.D., but all of them failed to achieve anything. In the absence of any definite details we put their number at two only.²⁰⁸

Expedition of Jujhar Singh (1697 A.D.)

The Emperor was exasperated. In the Deccan Raja Ram, the younger son of Shivaji, had made life hard for him. In the north he was expecting the same stiff resistance from Guru Gobind. In order to secure the most reliable report about the Guru, Aurangzeb despatched Jujhar Singh, a Rajput prince. His deputy was Chandan Rae. They joined Rustam Khan, representative of Dilawar Khan. Gaj Singh Jaswal was commissioned by the Guru to intercept his force. He lay in ambush and finding his prey near, attacked them at Bhalan village in Thana Nurpur of Una district, and drove them away. In a desperate fight both Raja Jujhar Singh and Chandan Rae were killed. The enemy failed to reach Anandpur and retired to Lahore.²⁰⁹

Prince Muazzam's march into the Hills (1698 A.D.)

The news of these repeated disasters at last reached the Emperor in the Deccan. He, thereupon, asked his son, prince Muazzam, to pay personal attention to these rebellions in the Punjab hills. Prince Muazzam, later Emperor Bahadur Shah, was imprisoned by Aurangzeb in 1686 A.D. and was set free in 1691 A.D. He remained viceroy of north-west region, including Punjab and Afghanistan from 1696 to 1699 A.D.²¹⁰ He resided at Kabul and occasionally visited other provinces. He came to Lahore and sent a large force under Mirza Beg against the Guru and the hill chiefs. Mirza Beg won some initial successes and reduced all the hill chiefs to submission. But he could not crush the power of Guru Gobind. It is said that it was mainly due to the influence of Bhai Nand Lal, Mir Munshi of Prince Muazzam, that large-scale and effective measures were not taken against the Guru. Bhai Nand Lal was a devotee of Guru Gobind and he told his master that it was not proper on his part to wage a regular war against saints. Besides, the Prince thought that a liberal treatment of the Guru might result in making him a peaceful subject of the empire. Furthermore, the Prince considered the Guru as a Darvesh as he later on declared in one of his firmans or royal rescripts.²¹¹ Besides, he had seen the Guru's vast resources in men and material. He knew that Guru's young disciples made good soldiers who were ever ready to lay down their lives at his bidding. Emperor Aurangzeb was

then very old. The struggle for the throne was imminent, and he was keen on securing Guru's spiritual, material and military help. Nand Lal seems to have wielded his personal influence with the Prince in favour of the Guru. Thus, because of Bhai Nand Lal's influence in the court of the Prince, the Guru got some breathing time and during this period, he reorganised his followers and created what is known as the *Khalsa*.

Battle with Alam Chand and Balia Chand

Soon after the Guru himself was called upon to fight an action. The neighbouring hill chiefs were jealous of the growing power of the Guru. Besides, the repeated raids of the Sikhs in the hostile territories constantly reminded some of the chiefs of the growing danger. And, therefore, they were always in search of an opportunity to do a short work of the Guru. One day, it is said, when the Guru went out for a hunting in the Doon, with only a small number of the Sikhs, two hill chiefs Alam Chand and Balia Chand, finding an easy opportunity, fell upon him. The Sikhs, a small number of them as it was, gave a determined fight, but being too few they had to retreat a little in the face of a strong opposition from the enemy. The Guru, seeing this, advanced and the Sikh's gathering courage resumed the fight. Meanwhile, a timely reinforcement under Ude Singh also arrived and the situation was saved. Alam Chand lost his right arm and left the battlefield. Balia Chand continued, but he too later fell wounded and their soldiers took to heels. The Guru returned victorious.

Fortification of Anandpur

The Guru was in perpetual danger from the hill Rajas and the Mughal governors. He wanted to live in peace, but he was determined to take defensive measures. For that purpose he erected five forts all around the town: Keshgarh at the centre, Anandgarh, 500 metres to the east, Lohgarh, one kilometre to the south, Holgarh, one and a half kilometres in the west, Fatehgarh, one and a half kilometres to the north. Anandgarh and Keshgarh were built on hill tops. All were located at strategic places. Fatehgarh, Holgarh and Lohgarh were situated on the banks of Charan Ganga. All the forts could take big guns. They were joined together with skilfully constructed earthworks and underground tunnels. The construction began in 1689 and took ten years to be completed. The strongest fort was Anandgarh. It still exists. For water supply, a huge well was dug up. It was worked by a Persian wheel. The well and the wheel are still there. He also set up an arsenal in it.²¹²

THE POST-KHALSA PERIOD

(1699 A.D.—1708 A.D.)

The creation of the *Khalsa* in 1699 was not looked at with favour by most of the hill chiefs. Firstly, his denunciation of the caste system and image worship was a direct attack on their religious beliefs. Secondly, they saw in the democratic teachings and the military zeal of the Guru, a serious menace to their influence and independence. Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur, in whose jurisdiction the headquarter of the *Khalsa*, Anandpur, was situated, felt much more concerned than any other hill chief. He wanted a pretext to turn the Guru out of his state and, therefore, wrote to the Guru that he should pay a huge sum of money as rent of Anandpur for the period he had occupied it. This was quite unreasonable and the Guru naturally turned down his demand. Consequently, Raja Bhim Chand, in alliance with other hill chiefs, invaded the Sikh territory and besieged Anandgarh. The Sikhs, though greatly outnumbered, fought with determined courage and succeeded in saving their fortress.

Guru Gobind Singh had to fight twelve battles after the creation of the *Khalsa*. Of these, six took place at Anandpur and the rest at Nirmohgarh, Basali, Kiratpur, Sarsa, Chamkaur and Khidrana or Muktsar. The *Khalsa* took readily to the sword straight from the plough and sickle, and fought with the trained and professional soldiers as bravely as they had battled with all the potent forces of nature. These people were loyal to their leader, faithful to their word, fond of their country, loved their wives and children, looking upon treason and impurity as the greatest of crimes. These men were rough, strong, and uncultivated, and offered a fierce and protracted resistance under the inspiration of Guru Gobind Singh. Their work was not war for its own sake, but to slay this dragon, the devouring enemy of their faith.

First Battle of Anandpur (1699 A.D.)

The hill chiefs were very much perturbed at the growing power of the Guru. The *Khalsa*, a militant force, created by the Guru, had given them a fright. They were of the view that in course of time the *Khalsa* would eliminate them. They were also pressed from Delhi to get the Guru evicted from their territory. Emperor Aurangzeb also had issued orders to his Governors in Punjab to crush the power of the Guru. Macauliffe says that the Viceroy of Delhi despatched a force of ten thousand men under his two generals, Painsa Khan and Dina Beg. The

hill chiefs joined them at Rupar. The Guru met the enemy near Anandpur. In a battle Painda Khan was killed. Dina Beg and the hill Rajas fled away. They were pursued by the *Khalsa* for some distance. A large booty in the form of horses, arms and baggage fell into the hands of the Sikhs.²¹³

Second Battle of Anandpur (1699 A.D.)

After this defeat, the hill Rajas formed a coalition and decided to act in concert with one another, independently of the Mughals. Bhim Chand of Bilaspur became their leader. He sent a message to the Guru to vacate Anandpur as it lay in his territory and settle somewhere else or face the Rajas' army. Sainapat in *Gur-Sobha* says:

He sent a message in writing
Guruji, vacate our land or
Pay tribute, or fight.²¹⁴

The Guru, however, refused any of the two alternatives, saying that the land where the town of Anandpur developed had been purchased by his father and hence there was no question of paying any rent. He accepted the alternative of another trial in the battlefield. Receiving this reply, the hill chiefs were enraged and they marched their combined forces on Anandpur. As they approached the city, the eldest son of the Guru, Prince Ajit Singh, fell upon Gujjars and Ranghars with his four thousand Sikhs; while Daya Singh, Alim Singh and Ude Singh, taking with them the Sikhs of Majha, directed their attacks against the hill armies. "Such was the dash and vigour displayed by them that the hill armies, though far superior in numbers and equipment, were reduced to a sore plight and towards the close of the day were forced to retreat."²¹⁵ Thus ended the first day's fight yielding complete victory to the Sikhs. The story was repeated on the next day and the hill chiefs now decided the blockade of the town to be the safest alternative.

The town was now closely invested and the siege continued for full twenty days,²¹⁶ but without any visible success. At last, at the suggestion of Kesri Chand, a drunken elephant with a spear projecting from his forehead and his body covered with steel, followed by hill chiefs and their armies, was directed to gatecrash through the fort. The Guru appointed Bachitar Singh, one of his personal bodyguards, to meet the elephant. The Sikh proceeded with such a vehemence on a horse that when he struck his spear on the elephant's forehead, it pierced deep, and

the elephant turned back with a loud cry and trod underfoot many of its own men, thus causing a complete confusion among them. The Sikhs fell upon this confused mass of their opponents and did several noted chiefs to death. But finding themselves greatly outnumbered, they later on retired into the fort.

As the night fell, the hill chiefs met together and reviewed the situation. Ultimately, resolving to play a trick on the Guru they wrote a letter to him acknowledging his unconquerable might, but requesting him to leave Anandpur at least for one day to save them from the shame and humiliation which would be involved in their retreat in that condition. They also swore by the cow that they would not put the Guru to any harm. Determined to demonstrate the faithlessness of the hill chiefs, as some records say, the Guru, entrusting the protection of the fort to the hands of a brave body of Sikhs, selected a band of warriors and retired to Nirmoh, at a distance of about two miles from Anandpur.

Battle of Nirmoh (1700 A.D.)

At Nirmoh the Guru stationed himself on an eminence. In the meantime, the hill chiefs having thrown their vows to the wind, fell upon the small number of the Sikhs who accompanied the Guru. But here again they were beaten back. The hill chiefs, however, continued their efforts against the Guru. They made one more appeal to Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sarhind, for help. After hearing of the defeat of the imperial army in the first battle of Anandpur, Aurangzeb himself is said to have sent an order to Wazir Khan by this time to proceed against the Guru.

Wazir Khan, thus, proceeded with a large number of troops to the assistance of the hill chiefs. The Guru had already been apprised of this development. Several Sikhs who had come to Nirmoh to have the Guru's Darshan, were detained by him to fight the enemy. The enemy marched and the Mughals attacked the Guru from one side, while the hill chiefs attacked him from the other. The fight continued fiercely for the whole day and as the night fell, the enemy forces were compelled to retreat. The next morning, the attack was re-started and the Guru finding himself badly outnumbered, decided to retire from the place. An invitation had already been received from the Raja of Basali and the Guru proceeded thither. The enemy, however, pursued him and the Guru decided to give them another battle in which the combined forces of the Mughals and

The First Battle of Chamkaur (1702 A.D.)

The peace between the Guru and the hill chiefs did not continue for long. Once, it is said, as the Guru lay encamped near Chamkaur, two imperial officers going from Lahore to Delhi, were requested by the Raja of Kehlur to attack the Guru, promising to pay them large sums of money. Though a small contingent, the Sikhs gave a resolute fight to the imperial army, but just when the fight was at its height, an amazing thing occurred. Sayyid Beg, one of the imperial officers who had already heard of the name and fame of the Guru, when saw him in the battlefield he was so much impressed by his saintly looks that he, persuading as many of his soldiers as he could, joined the Guru. When Alif Khan, the other officer, saw it, he left the battlefield and beat a hasty retreat.²¹⁷

victories and have been able to grant gifts to others. It is through their favour that I have acquired knowledge and my enemies have been exterminated. Through their favour have I acquired honour otherwise there are millions of ordinary mortals like myself. It is a great pleasure for me to serve, no other service pleaseth my heart. To grant gifts to them is the right thing, to grant gifts to others seemeth of no avail to me. To bestow gifts on them beareth fruit in the next world and bringeth honour in this, to bestow them on others is of no use at all. Let my body, my mind, my head, my wealth and all that is mine be dedicated to their service."²²⁰

These continuous repulses disheartened the Mughal governments of Delhi, Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu as well as the Rajas of Kangra hills. They wrote to Aurangzeb warning him against the growing power of Guru Gobind Singh. They stated that the Emperor's conquests in Deccan might lead to the loss of north-western India from Delhi to Kabul. They

invited him to take command against the Guru personally and destroy his power root and branch. This upset Aurangzeb. He issued strict instructions to his Governors and the hill Rajas. He suggested that the Guru should be compelled to evacuate Anandpur either by force or by fraud and, then, he should either be captured or killed. He despatched a personal letter to the Guru holding out a mild threat. He wrote:

"There is only one Emperor. Thy religion and mine are the same. Come to me, by all means, otherwise I shall be angry and go to thee. If thou come, thou shalt be treated as holy men are treated by monarchs. I have obtained this sovereignty from God. Be well advised and thwart not my wishes."²²¹ The letter was brought by a Qazi to whom the Guru handed over the following reply: "My brother, the sovereign who hath made thee Emperor hath sent me into the world to do justice. He hath commissioned thee also to do justice, but thou hast forgotten his mandate and practisest hypocrisy. Wherefore how can I be on good terms with thee who pursuest the Hindus with blind hatred? Thou recognisest not that the people belong to God and not to the Emperor, and yet thou seekest to destroy their religion."²²²

The Battle of Kiratpur (1704 A.D.)

In September, 1704 A.D. the Mughal forces from Delhi and Sarhind and of the Rajas of Kangra hills, Muslim Chiefs, Jagirdars, Ranghars and Gujjars of the neighbourhood advanced from the Rupar side to attack Anandpur. Guru Gobind Singh marched to Kiratpur to check the enemy. According to Muhammad Akbar, "a fierce battle took place near Kiratpur. Although the Sikhs are said to have fought very desperately, yet they were driven back and the Guru had to take refuge in the fort of Anandpur."²²³

The Fifth and the Last Battle of Anandpur (1704 A.D.)

In this emergency, the Guru invited help from his Sikhs. He issued several letters of which only one is quoted below: "Sri Guru Ji addresses the letter to Bhai Sukhya, Bhai Mukhya, Bhai Parsa. The Guru would take care of all his disciples. Repeat Guru Guru, you will have the best in life. The entire community is my *Khalsa*. Come with cavaliers, footmen, gunners and daring youth. Every Sikh young man coming to pay respects would be blessed with prosperity. He would flourish fully

well. The Guru would fulfil all their desires. Come for a darshan (1704 A.D.)."²²⁴

The Emperor was now alarmed still further. According to Suraj Prakash, Bhim Chand of Kahlur himself went to the Emperor to inform him of the situation and the Emperor sent express orders to Wazir Khan of Sarhind and Zabardast Khan of Lahore to proceed with a large army against the Guru. The chiefs of Kahlur, Kangra, Jaswal, Mandi, Kulu, Nalagarh, Kaithal, Nurpur, Chamba, Jammu, Busaher, Dhadwal, Darauli, Bijarwal and Srinagar (Garhwal) joined their forces and this formidable army marched against the Guru to have another trial of strength.

The guru divided his army into six contingents, each roughly consisting of 500 men. They were placed in five forts, while a detachment of 500 men, kept in reserve. Anandgarh, was under Guru's personal charge. Fatehgarh was entrusted to Udai Singh, Holgarh was under the command of Mohkam Singh, Guru's eldest son Ajit Singh controlled Keshgarh, while his other son Jujhar Singh held Lohgarh. Ajit Singh won a great victory on the very first day by killing Jagatullah, leader of Ranghars and Gujjars.²²⁵

The Guru had mounted two heavy guns, named Bāghan, or tigress, and Vijayghosh or victory-declaration, on his fort. They were brought into action and they wrought a havoc in the enemy ranks. In the first day's fight Wazir Khan lost nine hundred men. The siege was conducted with great intensity. All means of ingress and egress were completely cut off. As the provisions were running short, price of eatables rose very high. Flour was selling at two rupees a kilogram in Anandpur. The civilian population being hard pressed began to flee. Scarcity also prevailed in the Guru's camp. Each soldier was supplied one hundred grams of flour daily. Soon provisions were completely exhausted. The *Khalsa* lived on leaves and bark of trees. Water supply from the channel was cut off. Generally, four men were sent to fetch one bucket of water. Two men fought the enemy. One carried the bucket and the other defended him.²²⁶

At this time the Jats of Majha made up their minds to go home. The Guru would not permit them to leave. When they persisted, they were asked to give in writing that they were not the *Khalsa* of Guru Gobind Singh. Only forty of them put their thumb impression on the disclaimer and retired. A small hilly channel taking off from Charan Ganga, supplied water to Anandpur. Bhim Chand diverted its course. The provision had almost been finished and the inmates lived on whatever

they could get. Taking advantage of this situation, Wazir Khan formed a plan to capture the Guru alive and send him to Aurangzeb to win his pleasure and goodwill. He opened negotiations with the Guru promising safe evacuation. Many Sikhs who were starving welcomed this overture. They requested Gobind Singh's mother to exert pressure on the Guru to accept the offer. The Guru's mother and some Sikhs approached the Guru to accept the offer, but to demonstrate the futility of putting reliance upon the enemy's promises, the Guru sent but some bullocks loaded with rags and stones covered with golden clothes, giving out that it was the Guru's treasure and the Sikhs and he himself were to follow it. As, however, the bullocks passed through the enemy lines, they were looted out only to their disappointment. The Sikhs thus continued to hold inside for seven months. Wazir Khan expressed regret for the misconduct of some of his troops and produced an autograph letter of Aurangzeb as a guarantee for his assurances:

"I have sworn on the Quran not to harm thee. If I do, may I not find a place in God's court hereafter. Cease warfare and come to me. If thou desire to come hither, then, go wheresoever thou pleasest."²²⁷

Aurangzeb's envoy added:

"O Guru, all who go to the Emperor's court praise thee. On that account the Emperor feeleth certain that an interview with you will add to his happiness. He has sworn by Muhammad and called God to witness that he will not harm thee. The hill Rajas have also sworn by the cow and called their idols to witness that they will allow thee safe conduct. Bear not in mind anything that hath occurred. The attack on thine oxen was not prompted by any Raja. The attackers have been generally punished and the ring leaders are in prison. No one now, O True Guru, dareth do thee any harm; wherefore, evacuate the fort at any rate for the present and come with me to the Emperor. Thou mayest afterwards do what thou pleasest."²²⁸

On hearing this, the Sikhs again pressed the Guru to accept capitulation. The Guru's mother supported them. The Guru still refused to place any reliance upon the enemy's promises. In this desperate state of affairs, the Guru reluctantly agreed to evacuate Anandpur. He destroyed a lot of movable property, buried some underground and took some valuables with him. The evacuation began at dead of night—December 20-21, 1704 A.D.²²⁹ The entire camp was divided into two parts. The Guru's mother, wives, two youngest sons and other women of

the household together with all the manuscripts prepared by the Guru and his scholars left in the first batch. Udai Singh, the bravest commander of the Guru, was put in charge of this party at the head of two hundred armed horsemen. The Guru had given them a letter for the Raja of Nahan requesting him to give shelter to his family.²³⁰ They were to follow the direct road to Rupar and he would try to join them on the way as soon as possible. It was raining and a swift cold wind was blowing.

The Battle of Bachhora Sahib on the River Sarsa (December 21, 1704, A.D.)

The oath taken by the Hindus on their cow and by the Muslims on their *Quran* was, however, wantonly violated, as the Guru refers to in his *Zafar-Nama*, the letter later written to the Emperor. It is said, as the Guru reached the flooded Sarsa, the enemy fell upon him.²³¹ In the midst of rain, cold, darkness and fierce fighting, complete confusion prevailed among the Sikhs. Udai Singh and most of his warriors lost their lives. Some daring Sikhs pushed their horses into the swirling water forming foam against stones and pebbles and carried the Guru's family safely across 400 metres, the width of the river, but in this attempt all the property and manuscripts were washed away. The Guru's household was further divided into two groups. Guru's mother and his two younger sons who could not walk or ride for long, were taken by Gangu an old domestic servant of the family to his native village Saheri. Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Deva were hurriedly led towards Ambala in the disguise of rustic women.²³²

The Guru also suffered heavily. Having put up a tough fight he also threw his horse into the swollen current. Most of his men had been killed in the battle and many perished in the flow of the river. When he reached the other bank he was left with his two elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, the five beloved ones, and thirty-five other Sikhs, 43 souls in all out of about 400. At Rupar, 23 km farther, news was brought to him that about a thousand Mughal troops were advancing against him from Sarhind, while another force was crossing the river Sarsa.

The Second Battle of Chamkaur (December 22, 1704 A.D.)

The Guru realized his delicate position. The enemy was in front and at the rear. To his left were the hill states which were equally opposed to

him. The Guru rushed towards Chamkaur, 16 kilometres away. When he was in its neighbourhood he learnt that the enemy was closing upon him. He halted in a garden and sent two Sikhs inside the village to find a suitable place of shelter. They chose a mud-built double storeyed house with a large open compound. One of its two owners offered his portion. The Guru and his Sikhs hurried into it. It took place in the evening on December 21, 1704, A.D. The enemy invaded the place on the morning of December 22, 1704, A.D. Inayatullah Khan, in his *Akakam-e-Alamgiri*,²³³ says that the *haveli* was besieged by seven hundred cavalry equipped with artillery. But the number appears to be much larger. The house would have been blown up in no time. The enemy, however, aimed at capturing the Guru alive as it had been done in the case of Shivaji's son Shambhuji fifteen years earlier, or eleven years later in the case of Banda Singh Bahadur, both of whom were cut to pieces limb by limb. Out of his forty²³⁴ men about one-fourth were appointed to defend the gate. An equal number was kept in the upper storey to keep a sharp watch on the enemy movements. The rest took up their position along the walls to see that enemy did not scale over them.

Bitter fighting ensued. The eager and impetuous men of the Guru offered tough resistance. They were raked by the gunners. They received the direct fire of the batteries in front. The Sikhs fired from all sides, from behind the walls, from the roofs, through every window, through every air hole, and through every chink in the doors. But the fighting cost most of them their lives.²³⁵ The battle was fought on December 22, 1704, A.D. Guru Gobind Singh has referred to it in his first letter addressed later to Aurangzeb, thus:

"What could forty hungry men do when attacked by a numerous horde unawares? The oath-breakers suddenly attacked us with swords, arrows and muskets. I was forced to engage in the combat and I fought with arrows and muskets. When an affair passes beyond all remedy, it is lawful to resort to the sword . . . clad in black like a fly, they made a sudden charge. Every soldier who advanced from behind the wall, was struck by an arrow and fell deluged in blood. Those who did not leave the wall, received no injuries and suffered no loss. When I saw that Nahar had come out to fight, I instantly struck him with an arrow. Instead of fighting he fled away. Many other Khans eschewed their idle boast. Then another Afghan appeared in the field like a strong current and in the manner of an arrow or a bullet. A number of them made a valorous assault, some with care and others in madness. Many of the attackers were

wounded and two of them lay dead. The despicable Khwaja had not the courage to leave the shelter of the wall and come into the open. Alas! had I seen his face, I would have unhesitatingly bestowed an arrow on him. On both sides many lost their lives and sustained wounds by arrows and muskets. Arrows and bullets were discharged like fireworks and the earth turned red like tulip. Heads and legs lay in heaps as if the playground was littered with balls and sticks. The arrows whizzed and the bows twanged and great tumult rose in the world. The great noise was so frightful that even the mightiest warrior lost his wits. But how could forty, even of the bravest, succeed when opposed by a countless body?"²³⁶ In a few hours on a single day, the 39th birthday of the Guru, the two tender princes, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, still in their teens, three of the five beloved ones and thirty two other *Khalsa*, closely watched by the Guru, laid down their lives at the altar of faith and freedom.²³⁷

By the end of the day, the Guru was left with five disciples only, Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, Man Singh, Sangat Singh and Sant Singh. The Guru was contemplating on destiny's debacle and fickleness of the fate. In the midst of his mortifying musing, over the past 38 years of his life, he was interrupted by his five surviving Sikhs. They suddenly gathered in a group, whispered something among themselves and enacted the scene of Anandpur in which Gobind Singh, five years earlier, had played the double role of being the Guru and disciple at the same time. They told Guru Gobind Singh that at the moment they were the Guru and he was a *Khalsa*. They ordered him to escape in the interest of the Panth. Daya Singh, the first of the five beloved ones, Dharam Singh the second beloved one, and another Sikh Man Singh would accompany him. The remaining two Sant Singh and Sangat Singh would stay behind to continue the fight. Sant Singh who had great resemblance with the Guru wore his clothes and sat in the place of the Guru.²³⁸ Both of them remained behind to be captured by the enemy the next day, and Sant Singh was beheaded mistakenly for the Guru himself. Sangat Singh also died while fighting.²³⁹

The Guru and his three Sikhs dressed themselves as Mughal soldiers and managed to escape at about 2 o'clock in the morning one by one. It was decided that they would meet on the outskirts of Machhiwara, 27 kilometres away. The Guru was the first to leave. He stopped for a while at Jhar Sahib 12 km away. Here two Gujjars, Ramzu and Kalu, recognised the Guru. They raised an alarm. The Guru offered them a few gold coins in order to keep them quiet. They did not stop. The Guru silenced them

for ever with his sword. He arrived at Macchiwara first of all. On the outskirts of village Machhiwara, there was a garden. The Guru had reached there an hour before sunrise. He entered the garden and being completely exhausted lay in a corner among bushes, resting his head over a clod. At sunrise his three Sikhs found him lying fast asleep. A Sikh named Gulaba lived in that village. All the four took shelter in his house. But Wazir Khan, the determined enemy of the Guru, had issued orders to his generals that they should not take rest till the Guru was arrested. Consequently, parties of Mughal soldiers came to the jungles where the Guru was living in disguise. During this period, two Muslim friends of the Guru, Nabi Khan and Gani Khan, not only gave him protection, but also saved him from arrest. The Guru put on blue clothes, spread his hair loose on shoulders and assumed the appearance of a sufi saint. He was called the Pir of Uch. The Guru seated himself on a cot in accordance with the custom of the Pirs on a journey. It was carried by four men, two Sikhs and the two Pathans. One waved the Chauwar over the Guru's head and served as a reserve to give relief to others.

In village Lal²⁴⁰ a band of imperial troops intercepted them. The Guru addressed them in Persian. They insisted on verification. Qazi Pir Muhammad of Saloh village who had recognised the Guru certified that he was a Muslim saint. They reached Alamgir village, 50 kilometres away, near Gill railway station on Dhuri line, in safety. Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan left the Guru with Rae Kalha, a big Muslim zamindar, at Hehar village. He received the Guru warmly and kept him at Jatpura, near his headquarters to conceal his identity. At the Guru's request Rae Kalha sent a messenger to Sarhind, a distance of about 70 kilometres, to bring news about his family members.

Fateh Nama

The scout was expected to take at least a week in his mission. The Guru could not sit idle and he had to remain in hiding all the time. He was indeed a great literary man. He spent his time in expressing his feelings about Aurangzeb in a Persian poem. It is not available in full. At present it contains only twenty-three and a half couplets. Therein he speaks of the death of his two sons only. The following are the salient points of this letter:

1. The same God who has given you the kingdom, has conferred upon me the riches of protecting religion.

2. You do not deserve the name of Aurangzeb, because an adorer of the throne does not practice fraud.
3. I shall strike fire under the hoofs of your horses and I will not let you drink the water of Punjab.
4. What does it matter if a jackal through deceit and deception killed two cubs of a lion. (The reference is to the two elder princes, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, martyred at Chamkaur).
5. I have lost faith in your vows. I have no other work to do than to apply the sword.
6. If ever I have an occasion to meet you, I shall show you the right and true path.
7. Let the two armies stand in the field at a distance from each other.
8. Let the distance be twelve kilometres between them ($\frac{1}{2}$ verse-21).
9. After this I shall come into the field of battle all alone and you will come with two horsemen.
10. Come into the field yourself with a sword and a hatchet. Do not ruin the people of the creator.²⁴¹

Two Younger Sons of the Guru executed (December 27, 1704 A.D.)

The emissary returned in a few days. He said, Gangu, Mata Gujri, two princes, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, crossed river Sarsa when the flood was unabated. They came to Rugar and followed the road to Morindah where Gangu's village Saheri was situated. The news of Guru's battle had spread like wild fire in the neighbourhood. Gangu thought of his own safety first. He informed the government officials at Morindah about the persons in his charge. They were sent to Sarhind, headquarters of Wazir Khan.

Gangu was let off with a *Shabash*. The other three were imprisoned in a tower of the fort called *Thanda Burj* or the cold tower. It was a summer resort for officers, but was most uncomfortable in the depth of winter for eighty-year old lady and two children aged eight and five. Wazir Khan was the bitterest foe of the Guru in particular and of the Sikhs in general. He was biting his lips in rage for his failure to capture the Guru. He now resolved to exercise his power and authority on little children.²⁴²

On December 24, 1704, A.D., the children were produced before him in a public durbar in the presence of hundreds of fully armed and

ferocious looking soldiers to overawe the boys. They were told that the Guru, their elder brothers and all the Sikhs had been killed. They were offered security of life and comfortable living by embracing Islam. The children spurned the suggestion with utmost contempt and anger. Did our grandfather, Guru Tegh Bahadur, accept Islam? they asked. The Nawab's toady courtier, Suchanand Khatri, remarked that the young ones of snake were equally poisonous. On December 25, the children were again summoned in the court but all pressure tactics failed in securing the submission of the boys. Nawab Sher Muhammad Khan of Maler Kotla had fought against the Guru in the battles of Sarsa and Chamkaur. One of his brothers and a nephew had been killed while fighting. Though the Nawab was bitterly opposed to the Guru, the young age of the children, their fearlessness, and their moral courage of the highest degree, touched the tender cords of his heart. Wazir Khan asked Sher Muhammad to take charge of the boys and kill them. He declined to do so. To terrorise them further, they were bricked up shoulder high in the fort wall. The children stood firm in their resolution against apostasy. In anger they pushed down the temporary structure built in mud and bricks. Thereupon they were beheaded on December 27, 1704, A.D., and their bodies were thrown away. A local *bania* named Todar Mal, a rich banker,²⁴³ picked up the bodies and took them to the Guru's mother who collapsed at first sight and died. Todar Mal cremated the three bodies. The place their bodies were thrown is now marked by the gurudwara called Fatehgarh Sahib. On the site where the three bodies were cremated stands the Gurudwara Joti Sarup, 1.5 km south-east of Fatehgarh Sahib.

As regards the wives of the Guru, Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Deva, the messenger said that they had passed Sarhind in disguise of local jat women undetected on their way to Ambala. Later on the Guru learnt that they could not go to Nahan via Naraingarh as the numerous hilly streams crossing the ten kilometer long road were impassable and the road via Barara and Sadhaura was blocked by the chief of the latter place who had persecuted Budhu Shah for helping the Guru. They trudged on and reached Delhi. They lived in Matya Mahal, a thickly populated Muslim locality, and later on shifted to the area on the backside of the present Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital outside Delhi gate. A Gurudwara stands at this place called Gurudwara Mata Sundari Ji.

A young and pretty girl named Anup Kaur, believed to be Mata Jito's younger sister²⁴⁴ was captured by Sher Muhammad Khan, Nawab of Malerkotla, who desired to admit her in his harem. She was taken to

Malerkotla where she committed suicide. Having learnt about the fate of his family, the Guru marched on into the waterless sandy track of Bhatinda and took up his abode at Dina. Here he is said to have written the famous *Zafar Nama*, or the Persian Epistle, to Aurangzeb. In this he blamed Aurangzeb for his irreligious acts and justified his own conduct, particularly the use of sword against him. It has one hundred and eleven couplets. The total number of verses in both the letters comes to one hundred thirty-four and half.

The Zafar Nama

The *Zafar Nama* falls into three clearly marked parts. The first part consisting of twelve couplets is an invocation to God to resolve his difficulties. The second part contains 76 verses, 13 to 88. In the beginning he condemns the Emperor for his failure as a ruler, for his bigotry, for his breach of faith and treachery against taking an oath on the *Quran*. In the third part the Guru praises Aurangzeb for certain qualities in his character.

Aurangzeb had invited the Guru to his court at Aurangabad. The Guru said he would not wait upon such a faithless and false king. He told the Emperor that he had set up a revolutionary movement in Punjab. He justified this step by saying: "when the affair has passed beyond all remedies, it is lawful to have resort to the sword" (verse 22). Regarding the battle of Chamkaur, the Guru says: After all how could my men carry on the fight, when only forty of them were attacked by a countless horde? (verse 41). The Guru chided the Emperor for having acted against God and the Prophet: "You are faithless and irreligious. You believe neither in God nor in Mohammad" (verse 46).

Aurangzeb had invited the Guru to his court by swearing on the *Quran* that no harm would be done to him. The Guru declared him a liar and treacherous: "Were you to take a hundred oaths on the *Quran*, I would not trust you in the least" (verse 49). Aurangzeb had written to Guru: "Come to see me, otherwise I shall be displeased and come to you." The Guru declined to go to him and invited him to come to Punjab assuring him of complete safety: "If you had kept the oath on the *Quran*—I would have come to you immediately" (verse 57). "Come to the village Kangar and after that we will meet" (verse 51). "There will not be even the slightest danger on the way for the whole tribe of Brars is under me" (verse 59). Come so that we may talk to each other, and I will treat you well. (verse 60)

The Guru warns Aurangzeb against shedding innocent blood: "Do not strike a sword unscrupulously on a person, for heaven's sword will also smite you" (verse 69). The Guru tells the Emperor that the death of all his four sons did not matter much for him: "What does it matter that four children are killed, as the coiled cobra (*Khaisa*) is still alive?" (verse 78). The Guru repeats his determination not to visit his court in the Deccan:

"I will not come to you nor travel on this road. I will not go to that place where you want me." (verse 88)

The Guru realized that this condemnation would rouse the Emperor's wrath. In order to soften it he praised Aurangzeb for many good qualities: "Fortunate you are Aurangzeb, king of kings, skilful swordsman and rider. You are handsome and intelligent. You own a kingdom and riches. You are an expert in wielding the sword. You are as generous as you are a swordsman. You are intellectual and elegant, the bestower of land and wealth. Your generosity is great and in battle you are firm like a mountain. You possess the virtues of angels and splendour of the Pleiades or the seven stars" (verses 89-93). The Guru explains why the hill Rajas were opposed to him: "The idol-worshipping hillmen want to kill me because they are idol worshipper and I am an idol-breaker". (verse 95)

In the end, the Guru tells Aurangzeb that God is his helper and the Emperor will not be able to harm him: "If you are proud of your army and riches, I gratefully rely on God" (verse 105). "When God is a friend, what can an army do, though he may multiply enmity a hundred times? If an enemy practises hostility a thousand times, he cannot injure even a hair of his head". (verses 110-111)

This letter²⁴⁵ was taken to Aurangzeb by Daya Singh and Dharam Singh, two of Guru's three companions from Chamkaur. They disguised themselves as Muslim travellers and delivered it to the Emperor at Ahmadnagar in the Deccan, where he had been residing since January 20, 1706, A.D. Aurangzeb told the bearer of the letter to persuade their Guru to visit him. He provided them with an order for his officers to help them in their return-journey and the Guru on his way from Punjab to the Deccan.

The Guru stayed at Dina for a few days and then decided to move into the Lakhi jungle. The Guru left Dina and took to travelling from

village to village. He spent a few days in Kangar village. Then he stayed in an upper storey room called *Chaubarah* in a carpenter's house at Dhaliwal village. Passing through the villages of Jatal, Bhagta, Banhiwal, Sarvan, etc., the Guru reached Kot Kapura situated on the borders of Lakhi jungle. On the way he had collected a considerable following of Barar Jats on payment to fight against the Nawab of Sarhind. There lived the founder of the village, Kapura. He had built a fort at the place. Kapura lived in the style of princes and possessed great wealth and power. Guruji asked him to lend his fort temporarily for shelter and also his troops to fight against Wazir Khan. But he was reluctant because he was scared of the Mughal authorities. So the Guru retired across the Lakhi jungle to Khidrana on the borders of a sandy desert. He was told that there was a pond of water which would supply water to his men. Except that, there was no water available anywhere else for miles around. The Guru lived there in a hut about a kilometer south-east of the village where now stands the Gurudwara *Datan Sahib*. One morning while he was brushing his teeth sitting on the ground, one Muslim in disguise of a Hindu Jat approached him from behind. The Guru turned back. The assailant who was a spy of Wazir Khan rushed upon the Guru with a naked dagger. The Guru was always in arms. He immediately struck him with his sword and cut off his head. His grave lies close to the Gurudwara. There the Guru celebrated the Baisakhi festival on March 29, 1705, A.D.²⁴⁶

The Battle of Khidrana (May 8, 1705, A.D.)

The last battle of the Guru with the Mughals was fought at Khidrana in the modern Ferozpur district. The Chaudhri of Kot Kapura having refused him the use of his fort, the Guru proceeded to Khidrana and waited for the approaching enemy. In the meantime, the "forty" of the Sikhs who had renounced the Guru at Anandpur, were feeling repentant and proceeded to ask for the Guru's forgiveness. When near Khidrana they saw the Mughal army, they decided to wash off the blot and prepared to give them a battle. Bhago, leader of these Sikhs, called her men to attention. Their loose sheets or *Chādars* were spread on bushes to give an impression to the enemy that a large force lay encamped there. They sat scattered among bushes ready to fire. When the troops drew near, they suddenly raised a huge commotion and commenced fighting. The Guru also joined his Sikhs at a place now called *Tibi Sahib*. On the top of this hill the Guru took up his position and shot arrows on the enemy fast approaching towards him. It was a desert place where the battle was fought and the only pool of water was where the Guru

himself encamped. Hard pressed for want of water, after many of their numbers had been killed, the enemy retired yielding victory to the Guru. After that the Guru came out to the battlefield where the leader of this group of forty, Maha Singh, still had some life left in him. The Guru moved with utter love, wiped his face with his handkerchief and asked him his last desire. On being requested, the Guru sent for the deed of renunciation these Sikhs had signed, and tore it away. These forty Sikhs are known in the Sikh history as the *Forty Muktas* or "the forty saved ones", and the place where the battle was fought is now known as Muktsar. Mai Bhagoo followed the Guru to Nanded. She was considered a saint by the Sikhs. After the Guru's demise, she settled at Bidar, 190 km from Nanded. First she lived at Gurudwara Nanak Jhira, 1.5 km from Bidar town, and after some time she shifted to Jinwara, 10 km from Bidar.²⁴⁷

Though the Guru had defeated the Mughals at Khidrana, he did not feel secure enough to settle there. The Guru stayed at Khidrana up to October 1705, A.D. From Khidrana he moved to Bhatinda, 45 kilometres east. From there he went still 45 kilometres further east and arrived at Talwandi Sabo, in the beginning of January 1706, A.D., where many Sikhs joined him. This village came to be known Damdama Sahib, as it gave breathing space to the Guru. The Guru spent nearly 10 months here and resumed the work of religious propaganda. He also called some learned Sikhs and gave final shape to his literary works. It was at Talwandi Sabo that the Guru reproduced the whole sacred *Granth* from his memory and a hymn composed by his father was also added to it. Bhai Mani Singh was a scholarly person like Bhai Gurdas. The Guru dictated *Bani* to Bhai Mani Singh. Four copies of the holy *Granth* were made at Damdama Sahib. One of them is at Akal Bunga, Amritsar, second at Patna, third at Anandpur, and the fourth at Damdama Sahib.²⁴⁸ Thus the *Adi Granth* was finally edited there. The literary works of Guru Gobind Singh were lost in the river Sarsa near Rupar. Here at Damdama, the works of collecting his literary works was also started with the help of Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Deep Singh, Mata Sundari Ji, and some other Sikhs. It was because of these literary activities that Talwandi Sabo or Damdama earned the title of *Guru ki Kashi* or Guru's Banaras.²⁴⁹

Aurangzeb invited the Guru to come to him. Inayatullah²⁵⁰ says that Guru Gobind Singh had sought an interview with the Emperor. Aurangzeb deputed Shaikh Muhammad Yar *Mansabdar* and Muhammad Beg Guzzbardar to console "Gobind Rai Nanak Prastan", and bring him

to the court. The Prime Minister Munim Khan was instructed to provide him escorts on the borders of every province and pay him travelling expenses if demanded.²⁵¹

The Guru started for the south from Damdama Sahib on October 21, 1706, A.D. He sent his wives back to Delhi under the charge of Bhai Mani Singh. He passed through Hissar, Sarsa, Sadulpur, Churu, Sikar, Ringas and Phulera. At Naraina, a village five kilometres from Phulera, Jait Ram Mahant met the Guru. In the course of conversation the Guru asked the Mahant if he could secure help from Rajput princes to eliminate the Mughal government. He replied that it was almost impossible. The war between Rathors and Mughals was in full swing in Marwar and hence Ajit Singh could give no help. Jai Singh of Mewar had made peace with Aurangzeb. Mohkam Singh of Nagor was openly on the Emperor's side. Jai Singh, the young Raja of Jaipur, was in the Mughal camp and was fighting under Aurangzeb against the Marathas. He suggested that the Guru should use Madho Das Bairagi, a young fiery Rajput from Punjab hills, in his service. He was a brave fellow, thoroughly patriotic and sincere. He had been living in Maharashtra for long. He was fully aware of the Maratha methods for successfully opposing the Emperor. He was living on the banks of Godavari at Nanded. At Baghaur in Rajasthan, Daya Singh and Dharam Singh met the Guru. They had delivered the Guru's letter to Aurangzeb and had brought a message from him that he was anxious to see the Guru. Shortly afterwards, when he was still at Baghaur, the Guru learnt that Aurangzeb had died at Ahmadnagar on February 20, 1707, A.D.²⁵²

The Guru decided to turn towards Delhi to meet his wives who were living there. In Delhi, the Guru first stayed in a house lying at the back of Humayun's tomb. The site is now marked by the Gurudwara Damdama Sahib. As a token of love for Harijans of Delhi on account of Jaita's valorous deed, the Guru shifted to the colony of shoe-makers, called *Mochi Bagh*. The *mochis* served the Guru with great devotion. The Guru was so highly pleased with the residents of the colony that he changed its name to *Moti Bagh*, the abode of pearls. A gurudwara stands at this place.²⁵³

Bahadur Shah and Guru Gobind Singh (February 20, 1707 A.D.—October 7, 1708 A.D.)

Three sons had survived Aurangzeb, Muazzam, the living eldest, 64-years, was the Viceroy of north-western provinces, including

Afghanistan and Baluchistan. The 54-year old Azam, and 40-year old Kam Bakhsh were with the Emperor in the Deccan. Azam seized the imperial treasury, took command of Aurangzeb's army, and declared himself king on March 14, 1707, A.D. and rushed towards Delhi. Muazzam hurried from Kabul to Delhi. At Lahore he declared himself Emperor under the title of Bahadur Shah. He reached Delhi on May 20, where he spent three months of summer. Muazzam invited Guru Gobind Singh to join him, partly to avoid any Sikh rising when he was busy in a civil war, and partly to use the Sikhs in his cause. The Guru's contemporary sainapat says in *Sri Guru Sobha* that the Guru was approached for help by Muazzam's emissaries. Bhai Jodh Singh in *Sri Kalgidhar Hulas* says that Prince Muazzam deputed Nand Lal to prevail upon the Guru to join him with his Sikhs. After reading the Prince's letter, the Guru remarked that the Empire was his, but he should not be dishonest like his father. Nand Lal held out full assurance on behalf of the prince.²⁵⁴ It meant that the Guru blessed the Prince. The Guru remained in Delhi and invited Sikhs to join him. Several hundred Sikhs gathered there.²⁵⁵ They were sent under the command of Bhai Dharam Singh to support Muazzam against Azam. On June 8, 1707, A.D., a battle was fought at *Jajau*, near Agra. Azam, as well as his principal officers, were slain. Upon this his army fled from the field and victory remained with Bahadur Shah. The war of succession thus ended in favour of Bahadur Shah. He became the undisputed monarch of India, and returned to Agra. From there he dispatched Bhai Dharam Singh to inform the Guru of the victory. He also expressed a wish to see the Guru. The Guru accepted the invitation. Mata Sahib Deva pressed to accompany him and the Guru took leave of Mata Sundari who wished to stay at Delhi. After staying about a month at Delhi, the Guru started for Agra and visited Mathura and Brindaban on the way.²⁵⁶ He established his camp 12 km from Agra and 6 km from Bahadur Shah's camp. Munim Khan Khan-e-Khanan, the Prime Minister, invited the Guru at his place. He was warmly received and well-entertained. The Guru shifted his camp to a nearby garden. The Guru held assemblies twice a day. Many people came to attend them from far and near. On July 23, 1707, A.D., the Guru and his Sikhs, all armed, left for the court. The Emperor permitted them to attend the court with arms on. The Guru was warmly received. He was presented with a rich robe of honour, a jewelled scarf (*dhukhdukhi*) worth Rs. 60,000, and five lakhs of rupees in cash. Another present of costly clothes, jewellery and ornaments to the value of one lakh of rupees was granted for Mata Sundari, and sent to Delhi.²⁵⁷ The Emperor was deeply impressed by the Guru's personality. He requested him to spend some time with him and give him the benefit of his holy company. The

Guru accepted the invitation. He remained in or near Agra till the beginning of November 1707, A.D. During this period he used to meet the Emperor now and then. The Emperor greatly enjoyed the Guru's company and very often had religious discussions with him. In that way he came to learn a good deal about Sikhism in addition to what he had learned from his secretary, Bhai Nand Lal. The Guru also acquainted the Emperor with particulars of the excesses committed against him, his family, his Sikhs and the Hindus of the Punjab. He pointed out that, as far as he and his people were concerned, the chief sinner was Wazir Khan, Viceroy of Sarhind. Bahadur Shah was greatly moved and promised that when he had got firmly established on the throne, he would punish the murderer of the innocent children. In the meantime, he offered the Guru a *Jagir* and a large estate.²⁵⁸ The Guru, however, declined the offer. He had never cherished even the faintest desire to found a kingdom or principality. He has no ambition that way. Even after decisive victories against the hill chiefs, he had never occupied even an inch of their territory. The acceptance of a *Jagir* now would have meant the abandonment of his cherished ideal of bringing about an era of liberty and equality, a spirit of all brotherliness in the land, the ideal for which he had worked so hard and sacrificed so much so far. From the creator of a nation and the liberator of the people, he would have been reduced to the position of a petty chieftain. So, while he declined the offer, he impressed upon the Emperor the need of reversing the religious policy of Aurangzeb and restraining his viceroys and *Qazis* from bigoted persecution of the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Emperor's response to this appeal was encouraging and the Guru was hopeful of success. That such was the trend of the talks between the two can be inferred from certain words occurring in the letter (*hukamnama*) dated October 2, 1707, A.D. addressed by the Guru to the *Sangat* of Dhaul.

From the tenth Guru,

To the *Sangat* of Dhaul. You are my *Khalsa*. The Guru shall protect you. Repeat Guru, Guru. With all happiness we have come to the Padshah. A dress of honour and a jewelled *Dhukhdhuki* worth 60000 was presented to us. With the Guru's grace the other things are also progressing. In a few days we are also coming. My instructions to the entire *Khalsa Sangat* are to remain united. When we arrive in Kahlur, the entire *Khalsa* should come to our presence fully armed. He who will come shall be happy.²⁵⁹

Sammat 1764. Katik Ist
(October 2, 1707, A.D.)

In this letter, the Guru refers to "other things are also progressing". These other things could only be the friendly negotiations then going on between himself and the Emperor. Just then news arrived that disturbances had broken out in Rajasthan and that Bahadur Shah's youngest brother, Kam Bakhsh, was in revolt at Hyderabad in the Deccan. The Emperor left Agra for Rajasthan on October 28, 1707 A.D. taking the Guru with him. The Guru had two objects in view in accompanying the Emperor. One was to secure the royal order for punishment of Wazir Khan, and the second to meet Madho Das who was then living at Nanded. The real object of the Emperor was not to allow the Guru any occasion to revive his struggle against the Mughal government. Emperor even offered the Guru a daily allowance of Rs. 1000.²⁶⁰ So the Guru thought that when the Emperor was so much inclined towards him he might succeed in getting at least Wazir Khan punished.

The friendly relations of the Emperor with the Guru was not liked by the Mughal courtiers. The entire Mughal court was anti-Hindu and anti-Sikh. The Guru was looked upon as a rebel punishable with death. Wazir Khan was a hero for them, fit to be rewarded rather than punished. His representatives were always in attendance at the court. They must have reported this matter to his master. The Guru's influence with the Emperor was looked down upon by one and all. Every courtier was alert to see that no harm came to Wazir Khan, while intrigues and machinations to harm the Guru were set afoot in right earnest. They reached Nanded on the bank of river Godavari in mid-August 1708, A.D. There the Guru halted as he was anxious to meet Madho Das Bairagi. The Emperor also encamped there as he did not want to leave the Guru alone.

Wazir Khan was very much upset on learning that the Emperor had conferred a costly dress of honour on the Guru at Agra. He understood that the excesses committed by him lay beyond the limits of pardon by the Guru. He was terribly afraid of the successful result of the Guru's negotiations. He knew that Jahangir had handed over Chandu Shah to Guru Hargobind. He was determined to avoid that fate. He won over by gifts and cash in the name of Islam all the big courtiers who were in the Emperor's confidence. They continuously impressed upon the Emperor not to yield to Guru's pleadings. To excite the religious bigotry of the nobles and troops against the Guru and to secure his assassination, Wazir Khan deputed a Sayyid with two Pathans to remain in Bahadur Shah's entourage.²⁶¹ The Guru and his Sikhs remained unaware of these machinations, and even if they knew, they did not care and bother about it.

All this time the Emperor went on making evasive replies to the Guru's suggestions about punishing the wrongdoers. At last, the Guru was convinced that there was no prospect of the Emperor's agreeing to any proposal for the redressal of the wrongs. The Guru expressed his deep disappointment at the Emperor's attitude. He told Bahadur Shah that he would not depend upon him any longer and would try his own resources to punish the tyrant. The Guru separated himself from the Imperial Camp and set up his own independent *derah* at a stone's throw, one km outside the city in a colony known as Afzalnagar and called by the Sikhs Abchalnagar by purchasing a plot of land from Sayyid Sabir Shah Faqir who objected to Guru's camp on his land.²⁶² This took place towards the close of August 1708, A.D. Here the Guru met Madho Das and the Guru handed over the mission of punishing the wrongdoers in the Punjab to him, as we shall study in the following chapters. The Guru held a *darbar* towards the middle of September 1708, A.D. It was attended by all the Sikhs and other leading men of the place. The Guru declared that he was investing Banda Singh Bahadur with authority to complete his work of national struggle in Punjab. John Clark Archer says that the conference discussed some disagreements with the Mughals and reached a decision to wage a war against them.²⁶³

The Emperor was enraged with the Guru for deputing Banda Singh to Punjab to renew the struggle and kill Wazir Khan. He was also afraid that the Guru might join the Marathas in their struggle against the Mughals when the Emperor would be busy in warfare against his brother at Hyderabad. It was for this reason that though being in a hurry to reach Hyderabad as soon as possible to suppress the revolt of his brother Kam Baksh, he was staying at Nanded, and was not leaving the Guru alone. Bahadur Shah had the mistaken belief that the Guru's death would be a fatal blow to his scheme of renewing the revolution in Panjab by Banda. He, therefore, entered into a conspiracy with the two Pathans deputed by Wazir Khan. Gul Khan who was given the title of Jamshed Khan and his brother Ataulah Khan, were prevailed upon to put an end to the Guru's life as early as possible.

The two Pathans regularly attended the daily sermons of the Guru and displayed keen interest in his teachings. They also won the confidence of other Sikhs. On September 20, 1708, A.D., in the evening, the Guru was taking rest in his tent. He was all alone in the tent, while a few Sikhs were loitering here and there. The Guru was half asleep with his back towards the door lying on his right side. Just at this moment the

two Pathans came to visit the Guru. Nobody, suspected any treachery. One of them, Jamshed Khan²⁶⁴ by name, a huge and strong fellow quietly entered the tent of the Guru. He thrust his daggar (Jamdhar) into the left side of the Guru near the heart. The Guru seized the hand of the assailant, pulled the daggar out of his body and plunged it into the stomach of the Pathan killing him on the spot. The other Pathan was cut to pieces by the Sikhs.²⁶⁵ A *jarrah* or surgeon from the imperial camp already known to the Guru was immediately summoned. He applied ointment and stitched the wound, the Guru began to recover under proper care.²⁶⁶ The Emperor daily sent messengers to inquire after the Guru's health. The news that the Guru was speedily recovering dismayed him.

The Emperor, now decided to adopt a cunning device frequently used by his father. He planned to contrive the death of the Guru in such a way that the Emperor's complicity should never come to the surface. He sent rich presents to the Guru as a token of his pleasure at the Guru's speedy convalescence. Knowing the Guru's weakness for bows and arrows, he included two strong and hard, beautifully bedecked bows. A clever emissary accompanied by Firoz Khan, the *talukdar* of the place, was sent to deliver the gifts. His main duty was to see that the Guru himself tried the bows there and then. He was successful in inveigling the Guru to test the quality of the bows. The emissary enquired after Guru's health, praised his courage and condemned Gul Khan's treachery. Placing the gifts before the Guru he eulogized the bow as a piece of decoration and not for use as it was too hard for a normal human being to use it. It touched the Guru's heart. He said his Sikhs could wield it. A couple of them tried but failed. The Guru was incensed. He got up and bent the bow. In doing so the stitches of his wound gave way and blood flowed profusely. The wound was sewn again, but it putrefied.²⁶⁷ The Guru knew that his end was approaching. When at last he felt that his last moment had arrived, he "opened the *Granth Sahib* and placing five paise and a coconut before it, solemnly bowed to it as his successor. Then uttering "*Wahguru ji ka Khalsa! Wahguru ji ki Fateh!*" he circumambulated the sacred volume and said: 'O beloved *Khalsa*, let him who desireth to behold me, behold the *Granth*. Obey the *Granth Sahib*. It is the visible body of the Guru. And let him who desireth to meet me diligently search its hymns."²⁶⁸ About one and a half hours after midnight, he got up and carried on his usual recitation of the hymns, and then calling aloud his Sikhs, bade them farewell. The Guru departed from the world on Thursday, October 7, 1708, A.D.²⁶⁹

Dr. Hari Ram Gupta has given the following arguments to prove that Emperor Bahadur Shah was personally involved in the demise of Guru Gobind Singh.

1. The Emperor halted at Nanded for seven weeks, as long as the Guru was there. He left the place and crossed river Godavari in four or five hours, after the Guru's last breath.²⁷⁰ The Emperor was not in the Deccan on a picnic. For him every hour was critical. All the way from Ajmer to Nanded he had never stayed anywhere for more than a couple of days. His brother Kam Bakhsh had set himself up as Emperor at Hyderabad and was in open revolt against Bahadur Shah. At Nanded the Emperor was not making any military preparations. They had already been made. He delayed his departure from fear of the Guru. He was not prepared to leave him alone. The Guru had already sent Banda Singh Bahadur to Punjab to create disturbances there. He had openly defied the Emperor for his failure to punish Wazir Khan. The Emperor was afraid that the Guru might join the Marathas when he was involved in fighting with his brother.

2. On October 28, 1708, A.D., the Emperor ordered that a dress of mourning be presented to the son of Jamshed Khan Afghan who had been killed by Guru Gobind Singh. The imperial newsletter of Bahadur Shah's court records:

"Keh Guru Gobind Rae Jamshed Khan Afghan ra bajān
Kushtah būd khilat-e-mātami bapisar-e-Khan mazkūr
mrahuat shud."²⁷¹

Jamshed Khan was not a *mansabdar* of the Mughal court or a high dignitary upon whom alone such high honours were bestowed by the Emperor. He was a spy of Wazir Khan in the disguise of a soldier in attendance upon the Sayyid who was also deputed by the Governor of Sarhind.

3. It was two days later, on October 30, 1708, A.D., that the Emperor ordered for the grant of a robe of mourning to Guru Gobind Singh's family. The newsletter of the court states:

"26 Shaban year 2 (October 30, 1708, A.D.) Hukam Shud Ke bapisar
Guru Gobind Rao Nanak Paranthi Khilat-mātami pidar badehand."²⁷²

It means that the Emperor gave not only equality to Jamshed Khan

with Guru Gobind Singh in rank and status but also accorded him priority over the Guru. It should be noted that the Emperor did not offer the dress of mourning to Jamshed Khan's son during Guru's life time. He did so after the Guru's death, three weeks later.

4. "On 9 Ramzan year 2 (November 11, 1708, A.D.), it was represented that the deceased Guru Gobind Singh had left a lot of goods. What were the orders about its forfeiture?"

"It was ordered that such chattels would not replete the imperial treasury. This was the property of a *darvesh* (saint). There should be no interference with it."²⁷³ The Emperor's refusal to attach the Guru's property against the will of his courtiers show his diplomacy and cunningness. It was purely an eye wash of his complicity, a pious fraud.

Thus the Mughals wiped out the Gurus entire family—father, mother, four sons and himself. They killed thousands of his dear, brave Sikhs. But still they lost the game and the Guru won it. In the words of Gokul Chand Narang: "Though he did not live to see his high aims accomplished, Guru Gobind Singh's labours were not lost. Though he did not actually break the shackles that bound his nation, he had set their souls free and filled their hearts with a lofty longing for freedom and national ascendancy. He had broken the charm of sanctity attached to the lord of Delhi and destroyed the awe and terror inspired by the Moslem tyranny. He had taken up sparrows and had taught them to hunt down imperial falcons."²⁷⁴ He taught his Sikhs to regard themselves as the chosen of the Lord, destined to crush tyranny and oppression and look upon themselves as the future rulers of their land. He had, however, chosen one Banda Singh Bahadur to carry on his work as a temporal leader.²⁷⁵ In the words of Daulat Rai, "using his blood and bones as manure, Guru Gobind Singh planted the tree of Indian nationalism which flourished and fructified in due course. Though his ideal was not accomplished in his life-time, yet his labours were not wasted And before his death Guru Gobind Singh was fully satisfied that he had done his work well and had fully carried out the mission with which he had been entrusted by the Lord." It is true that he did not actually uproot the Mughal empire or power, but he shook it violently to its very foundations and paved the way for its decline and fall. The clash developed in the time of Banda Singh Bahadur, Nawab Kapoor and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and the Mughal power was ultimately destroyed and the Sikhs established themselves in the Panjab as a sovereign state.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ, ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਦਊ, ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਸਊ
2. *Adi Granth*, Rag Tilang, pp. 722-23.
ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ
ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥
ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ
ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੇ ਦਾਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥
3. Gupta, Hari Ram, *History of the Sikhs, The Sikh Gurus, 1469-1708*, Vol. I, p. 15.
4. The town sprang up again under the new name of Eminabad.
5. *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, p. 35 quoted by Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p. 44.
6. Most likely Babur came to know about the saintly character of Guru Nanak from Daulat Khan Lodi of Punjab, because Guru Nanak sometime worked at Sultanpur with Daulat Khan as a Modi in his store. One of the wives of Daulat Khan Lodi was the sister of Rai Bular. Rai Bular was very much impressed by the saintliness of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak was known to Rai Bular from his childhood at Talwandi, the birth place of Guru Nanak.
7. This account of the Guru's meeting with Babur is based on tradition widely current among the Sikhs. As Cunningham puts it, "The Sikh accounts represent Guru Nanak to have met the Emperor Babur, and to have greatly edified the adventurous sovereign by his demeanour and conversation, while he perplexed him by saying that both were kings and were about to found dynasties of ten." (footnote p. 40).
8. Among the books which have described this meeting may be mentioned the following: *Puratan Janam Sakhi, from Rama Nand to Ram Tirath* (G.A Natesan, Madras), Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, Kahan Singh's *Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature*, Vir Singh's *Guru Nanak Chamatkar*, Ganda Singh's *Inkishaf-i-Haqiqat*, K.S. Duggal's *Guru Nanak Dev*, Kartar Singh's *Guru Gobind Singh and the Mughals* and G.S. Chhabra's *Advanced History of the Punjab*.

Valuable first hand evidence would have been provided by Babur's *Memoirs*, but it has to be noted with regret that among the gaps which occur in the *Memoirs*, as recorded by himself, one is about the period from 1520 to 1526 A.D. If Babur had left a record of the events of this period, he would surely have mentioned his meeting with the Guru.

9. *Adi Granth*, Rag Asa, p. 360.

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥
ਆਪੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲ ਚੜਾਇਆ ॥
ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥

ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕੇ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨ ਰੋਸ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥
 ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵੱਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ॥
 ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ॥
 ਆਪੇ ਜੋੜਿ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥

10. *Adi Granth*, Rag Asa, p. 417.

ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆਂ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਂਇ ਸੰਧੂਰ॥
 ਸੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁੰਨੀਅਨਿ ਗਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਵੈ ਧੂੜਿ॥
 ਮਹਿਲਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹੋਦੀਆ, ਹੁਣ ਬਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲਨਿ ਹਦੂਰਿ॥

.....
 ਜਦਹੁ ਸੀਆ ਵੀਆਹੀਆਂ ਲਾੜੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ॥
 ਹੀ ਡੋਲੀ ਚੜਿ ਆਈਆ ਦੰਦ ਖੰਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ॥
 ਉਪਰਹੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਾਰੀਐ ਝਲੈ ਝਿਮਕਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ॥
 ਇਕ ਲੱਖ ਲਹਨਿ ਬਹਿਠੀਆ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਿਨ ਖੜੀਆ॥
 ਗਰੀ ਛੁਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਮਾਣਨਿ ਸੋਜੜੀਆ॥
 ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਸਿਲਕਾ ਪਾਈਆ ਤੁਟਨਿ ਮੋਤ ਸਰੀਆ॥

.....
 ਧਨ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਦੁਇ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਨੀ ਰਖੇ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਏ॥
 ਦੂਤਾ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਚਲੇ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਇ॥

.....
 ਇਕ ਘਰਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਇਕਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਪੁਛਹਿ ਸੁੱਖ॥
 ਇਕਨਾ ਏਹੋ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਬਹਿ ਬਹਿ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਦੁੱਖ॥

11. *Adi Granth*, Rag Asa, p. 418.

ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦੁਵਾਣੀ ਅਵਰ ਤੁਰਕਾਣੀ ਭਟਿਆਣੀ ਠਕੁਰਾਣੀ॥
 ਇਕਨਾ ਪੇਰਣ ਸਿਰ ਖੁਰ ਪਾਟੇ ਇਕਨਾ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਸਾਣੀ॥
 ਜਿਨਕੇ ਬੰਕੇ ਘਰੀ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਰੋਣਿ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ॥

12. Narang, G.C., *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 25.

13. *Adi Granth*, Rag Asa, p. 360.

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਣੈ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ॥

14. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 14.

15. Mohan Singh, *An Introduction to Punjabi Literature*, pp. 58-59.

16. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, Lahore, 1944, p. 24, quoted by J.S. Grewal in *Guru Nanak in History*, p. 145.

17. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 17.

18. Banerjee, Indubhushan, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, pp. 1, 9.

19. Mohan Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

20. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

21. Grewal, J.S., *Guru Nanak in History*, p. 145.
22. Banerjee, Indubhushan, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 153-56.
23. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, pp. 19-20. Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, p. 226.
24. Santokh Singh, *Suraj Parkash*, Vol. II, pp. 1349-53.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 1349-53. Kahan Singh Bhai, *Mahankosa*, p. 834.
26. Indubhushan Banerjee calls the story "very doubtful" perhaps because he does not get any reference from a contemporary Muslim chronicle. But Humayun had passed through the ferry at Goindwal, while crossing the Beas in 1540 A.D., as he was being pursued by the Afghan troops during his retreat to Lahore. Mention is made in almost all the books on Sikh history that Humayun sought the benedictions of the Guru in his adversity. (see pp. 120-21 of his book).
27. Gupta, Hari Ram; *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 115.
28. Banerji, A.C., *Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 43. Also see, Harbans Singh, *Guru Amar Das Ji*, p. 53.
29. Santokh Singh, *Gurpratap Suraj Granth*, Ras II, p. 10. Quoted in Hari Ram Gupta's *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 1, p. 122. Also see Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, pp. 97-98.
30. Chhabra, G.S., *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Vol. I, p. 548.
31. According to the *Bani* of Guru Amar Das, "a woman was Sati, or true, if she died of the pains of separation rather of burning herself on the funeral pyre". The translation of the couplet reads as under. See Gopal Singh, (tr) *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. III, p. 747. At another place, Guru Amardas says:

Yea, A sati is one who lives contented and embellishes herself with good conduct.
 And serves her lord with all her heart and cherishes him ever.

Adi Granth, p. 787.

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮੜਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ॥
 ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਰਹੰਨਿ॥
 ਜੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮਾਲੰਨਿ॥
32. See *Adi Granth*, p. 226. Also see Harbans Singh, *Guru Amar Das Ji*, pp. 56-57.
33. Banerjee, Indubhushan, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, pp. 158-59.
34. Kartar Singh, *Sikh Itihas*, pp. 160-61.
35. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, p. 103.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
37. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 333.
38. Bhalla, Sarup Das, *Mahma Prakash, Kavita*, p. 133.

39. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 333. 'When Gonda's son complaint to Jaffar Beg, he called Guru Amar Das to Lahore. The Guru did not go himself but he sent his Sikhs, Bhai Jagga, Bhai Kedari, Bhai Boola and Baba Budha to Lahore. They explained their standpoint and asked him to visit Goindwal to see things for himself to take a decision. This incident took place in 1569 A.D.
40. *Guru Pratap Suraj Prakash*, p. 1507.
He has given up vedic practices
And founded his own sect.
41. Bhalla, Sarup Dass, *Mehma Prakash*, p. 137. Jodh Singh, *Life of Guru Amar Das*, pp. 44-45. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, p. 105.
42. Bhalla, Sarup Dass, *Ibid.*, p. 138.
Listen to my words and understand
Fear none when you go there
Whatever questions are asked, answer properly.
43. *Adi Granth*, Rag Gujri, p. 491
ਇਹ ਮਨੁ ਕਾਸੀ ਸਭਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਿਮਿਤਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ॥
ਅਫਸਰਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਤਿਸੁ ਸੰਗ ਰਹਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਹਰਿ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਹੁਕਮ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਏਕੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥
ਜੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਭੁ ਸਚ ਹੈ ਸਚੇ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਇ ॥
44. Banerji, A.C.; *Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 105.
45. *Adi Granth*; Gauri Ki Var, M. 4, p. 306.
ਜੋ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਕਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀ ਸੋ ਸਾਚੈ ਮਾਰਿ ਪਚਾਇਆ ॥
46. Bhalla, Sarup Das; *Mahma Prakash*, p. 289.
47. Amritsar Gazetteer (1883-84), p. 61. George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. 1, p. 258 gives 1581 A.D. as the date of foundation of Amritsar. Sodhi Hazara Singh says that *Guru Ka Chak* was founded in 1573 A.D., p. 18. Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 126.
48. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 1.
49. Banerji, A.C., *op. cit.*, p. 117.
50. Narang Gokul Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
51. Sarkar, J.N., *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. I, p. 11.
52. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 20.
53. *Adi Granth*, Rag Bilawal, p. 825.
54. Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khulasat-ut-Taṭwārīkh*, p. 425. Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
55. During Guru Hargobind's imprisonment and later at the time of Hargobind's conflict with the Mughals, the original manuscript of the *Adi Granth* was taken away by the Guru's grandson Dhir Mal. He kept it at Kartarpur, where he lived.

When Guru Hargobind settled at Kiratpur in the closing years of his life, Dhir Mal kept it with him there also. Some sikhs of Guru Tegh Bahadur seized it by force, but the Guru returned it to Dhir Mal. It is still available at Kartarpur. Its copies existed at Patna and Dhaka also. At the time of Guru Gobind Singh, thirty copies of the *Adi Granth* were available at different places.

56. Mangal Singh, *Baba Budha Sahib*, p. 202.
57. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
59. Macauliffe, Vol. III, pp. 86-87. *Adi Granth*, p. 825.
 ਸੁਲਹੀ ਤੇ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਰਾਖ ॥
 ਸੁਲਹੀ ਕਾ ਹਾਥੁ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਪਹੁਚੈ ਸੁਲਹੀ ਹੋਇ ਮੁਆ ਨਾਪਾਕੁ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਕਾਢਿ ਕੁਠਾਰ ਖਸਮਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਕਾਟਿਆ ਖਿਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਗਇਆ ਹੈ ਖਾਕੁ ॥
 ਮੰਦਾ ਚਿਤਵਤ ਚਿਤਵਤ ਪਚਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਚਿਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਦੀਨਾ ਧਾਕੁ ॥
 ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਮੀਤ ਧਨ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਰਹਿਉਸ ਛੋਡਿ ਗਇਆ ਸਭ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਕੁ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਨ ਕਾ ਕੀਨੋ ਪੂਰਨ ਵਾਕੁ ॥
60. Macauliffe, Vol. III, pp. 73-76.
61. Latif, Syed Mohammad; *History of the Panjab*, p. 254.
62. Mujeeb, M., *The Indian Muslims*, p. 243.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
66. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
67. Smith, V.A., *Akbar*, pp. 301, 3, 11, 16, 21, 23, Prasad, Beni, *History of Jahangir*, pp. 51, 61, 62.
68. Gupta, Hari Ram; *op. cit.*, p. 147.
69. Syed Ahmud, *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, p. 26.
70. Mohsin, Fani, *Dabistan-e-Mazahib*, p. 234. Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
71. Prasad, Beni, *History of Jahangir*, p. 130.
72. Ahmud, Syud, *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, p. 25. Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, p. 149.
73. Jahangir, *Tarikh-e-Salim Shahi*, E and D, Vol. VI, p. 272.
74. Macauliffe, Vol. III, pp. 90-91.
75. Macauliffe, Vol. III, p. 91.
76. Shaikh Farid Bukhari, head of the Orthodox ulama at the court, was given the title of Murtza Khan and was appointed Viceroy of the Punjab.

77. Ahmud Syud, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
78. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 37.
79. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 63.
80. Ganda Singh, *The Sikh Review*, January 1972, p. 11, Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 151.
81. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
Whatever you ordain appears sweet.
I supplicate for the gift of Name.
ਤੇਰਾ ਭਾਣਾ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਗੈ,
ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਗੈ ॥
82. Rose, *Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes*, I, p. 683.
83. Satbir Singh, *Sada Itihas*, Vol. I, p. 164. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 254, Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
84. Ahmud Syud, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Mohsin Fani, *The Dabistan*, p. 234, quoted by Gupta, H.R. *op. cit.*, p. 152.
85. *Adi Granth*, Trumpp, Vol. LXXXII.
86. *Maktubat-e-Imam Rabbani*, I, Part III, Letter No. 193. Quoted by Ganda Singh in *Guru Nanak*, pp. 94-95.
87. *Ibid.*
88. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 99.
89. Payne, C.H., *A Short History of Sikhs*; pp. 31-32.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 2.
92. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, p. 127.
93. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 2.
94. Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 174.
95. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, p. 127.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
97. Indubhushan Banerjee, *Evolution of Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 32.
98. Gupta, Hari Ram, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 159.
99. *The Dabistan*, p. 234.
100. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
101. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
102. See Syed Mohammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 255.

"During the Emperor's residence at Lahore, Hargobind was admitted to an audience. He presented a rosary of pearls to his majesty, who was highly pleased with its splendour, and asked the Guru whether he could procure more pearls of the same kind as were contained in the rosary. The Guru submitted to his majesty that the rosary consisted of a complete set of a hundred and eight pearls, but Chandu, his Diwan, had taken most of them and the ornament was, therefore, incomplete. The Emperor asked the Guru how the pearls could have fallen into the hands of the Diwan. Upon this the Guru burst into tears and narrated to the king the whole story. The king was greatly enraged at hearing of the treatment which Arjan had met with at the hands of the Diwan, and orders were issued for the person of Chandu Shah to be handed over to Hargobind to avenge himself on him in any manner he chose for his father's death."

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-58. Also see, Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, 162.

104. See, Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

"After his return from Kashmir, we find Hargobind playing the role of a friendly collaborator of Jahangir. Mohsin Fani says: "Hargobind never separated himself from the stirrup of victorious Jahangir." (*The Dabistan*, p. 234). It is surmised that the Guru was invested with some sort of supervisory powers by the Emperor over the Punjab affairs, and was given command of a Mughal contingent consisting of 700 horses, 1000 foot and seven guns (Bhai Parmanand, *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, pp. 300-01). In addition to this, Hargobind's personal contingent swelled considerably. Pathan mercenaries from the north-west under their leader Painda Khan joined the Guru's banner in large numbers. There seems to be no doubt that Jahangir would have conferred upon Hargobind a high mansabdari rank, which the Guru could not accept owing to his position as the religious leader of a great community.

The Guru at the head of Mughal contingent as well as his own, moved about all over eastern Punjab. His duty was to suppress agitation or revolt in any part of this region. It was an honorary job. The Guru was not in regular service of the Mughal government. He accepted this job to raise the prestige of the Sikhs in the eyes of government officials and general public, to get his own men trained as military men, and to secure the person of Chandu Shah for punishment."

105. See, Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 62. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 52.

Both Dr. Narang and Cunningham hold that Kaulan was simply a concubine of the Kazi. She originally was Hindu, as her name Kaulan (Lotus) signifies, and forcibly abducted by the Kazi, but later escaped to the Guru, the champion of the Hindu religion. Some consider her merely a maid servant of the Kazi.

106. The Guru gave separate quarter to Kaulan and in order to perpetuate her memory, built a tank 'Kaulsar' which is up to this day known after her name.

107. The date given by Hari Ram Gupta is April 14, 1634 A.D.

108. Guntala was situated where now the district court of Amritsar stands.

109. Sarkar, Sir Jadu Nath; *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, p. 156.

110. Latif, Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

111. Sarkar, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 156.
112. Satbir Singh, *Sada Itihas*, p. 191.
113. A person named Sadhu was married to the Guru's daughter, Viro. He was a great devotee of the Guru. Sadhu said: "The slave Sadhu hath seen the Guru washed his feet and drunk the nectrous water therefrom." [Macauliffe, IV, p. 94]. Perhaps this Sadhu was different from Sadh. Macauliffe, IV, 147-50 refers to another Sadh or Sadhu.
114. Mohsin Fani, *Dabistan-e-Mazahib*, quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
115. Chhabra, G.S., *op. cit.*, p. 218. In this book Dr. G.S. Chhabra gives the name of two Masands, Bakht Mal and Tara Chand, instead of Sadh or Sadah. K.S. Narang also gives the same names of the masands from Kabul.
116. Mohsin Fani, *op. cit.*, quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69.
117. *Ibid.*
118. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 178.
119. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 52.
120. Latif, Syed Mohammad, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
121. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
122. Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 187.
123. Mohsin Fani, *op. cit.*, p. 239. Quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
124. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
125. McGregor, *History of Sikhs*, Vol. 1, p. 59.
126. Mohsin Fani, *op. cit.*, p. 235, Quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
127. Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 214.
128. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 209.
129. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
130. Fauja Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 15.
131. The Dabistan, *op. cit.*, p. 235, quoted by H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
132. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Voi. III, p. 203.
133. *Adi Granth*, p. 466.

ਮਿੱਟੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਪੇੜੇ ਪਈ ਕੁਮਿਆਰ॥
 ਘੜਿ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਇੱਟਾ ਕੀਆ ਜਲਤੀ ਕਰੇ ਪੁਕਾਰ॥
 ਜਲਿ ਜਲਿ ਰੋਵੇ ਬਪੁੜੀ ਝੜਿ ਝੜਿ ਪਵਹਿ ਅੰਗਿਆਰ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਕੀਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਕਰਤਾਰ॥

134. Gupta Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
135. Macauliffe, Vol. IV, p. 310.
136. Aurangzeb had not taken a serious view of Guru Har Rai's military assistance of Dara. Aurangzeb, therefore, ignored the political aspect and concentrated on the religious aspect. Instead of asking Ram Rae why his father had joined Dara, the Emperor demanded an explanation why the *Musalman* had been abused by Guru Nanak in a particular hymn. The stern nature of the Emperor, the awful atmosphere of the court and his own loneliness, frightened Ram Rae, a lad of 14. Out of fear he substituted the word '*Beiman*' in place of *Musalman*. Aurangzeb detained Ram Rae as a hostage at the court for Guru Har Rai's good behaviour. It also seems probable that the Emperor wished to have the Guru as a supporter of the Mughal Empire. Even after disowning Ram Rae by the Guru, Aurangzeb might have thought that the Guru would change his decision under imperial pressure. Ram Rae as the Guru would prove a pliant tool of imperial policy if he got the Guruship through official support. Aurangzeb knew the depth of Guru's influence on Jat peasantry of Majha and Malwa when he was the Governor of Sind and Multan from 1648 to 1652 A.D.

According to Hari Ram Gupta, it appears that Aurangzeb's hard pressure on Guru Har Rai to change his verdict in favour of Ram Rae for which he was not prepared under any circumstances brought about Guru Har Rai's untimely death at the young age of 32.

137. Trilochan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
138. Macauliffe; Sikh Religion, Vol. IV, p. 315.
139. *Muraqat-e-Abul-Hasan*, p. 202, cited and translated by Sri Ram Sharma, in *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 130.
140. Jadu Nath Sarkar; *A Short History of Aurangzeb*, p. 152.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
142. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
143. Irfan Habib; *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, p. 322.
144. Elliot and Dowson, VII, pp. 183-84.
145. Sarkar, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 152.
146. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-48.
147. *History of Panjab*, p. 176.
148. Sarkar, J.N., *op. cit.*
149. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Punjab*, p. 176.
150. Sarkar, J.N., *op. cit.*, p. 158.

The officially avowed policy in imposing the Jazia was to increase the number of Muslims by putting pressure on the Hindus. As the contemporary observer

Manucci noticed: "Many Hindus who were unable to pay turned Mohammadan to obtain relief from the collectors—Aurangzeb rejoices."

Khafi Khan says: "With the object of cutting the infidels and of distinguishing the land of the faithful from an infidel, the Jizia or poll-tax was imposed on the Hindus throughout all the provinces."

151. Latif, S.M., *op. cit.*, p. 176.
152. Khafi Khan, II, 51-52; Quoted by J.N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 354.
153. Banerjee, Indubhushan, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-66.
154. G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 115.
155. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.
156. Macauliffe, IV, p. 369.
157. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 209. Macauliffe, gives the name Sher Afghan Khan, the Viceroy in Kashmir, p. 369.
158. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 79.
159. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
160. Muhammad Ahsan Ijad; *Fragment of the Farrukh Siyar Nama* in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 79.
161. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

The entry in *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi* reads as follows: "Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 9th Guru was taken into custody by Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza of Rupar police post on 12 July 1675 A.D. at Malakpur Rangharan, Pargana Ghanaula, and sent to Sarhind, along with Diwan Mati Das and Sati Das, sons of Hira Mal Chhibbar, and Dyal Das son of Moti Das. They remained in jail at Basi Pathanan for four months. The brutes committed great atrocities on the Guru. The Guru calmly submitted." Harbans Singh, *The Sikh Review*, January 1982, pp. 41-43.

163. Sarkar, J.N., *A short History of Aurangzeb*, p. 137.

He agrees that the situation on the frontier had eased to enable the Emperor to return to Delhi in the beginning of winter of 1675 A.D. He writes: "By the end of the year 1675 A.D. the situation had sufficiently improved to enable the Emperor to leave Hasan Abdal and return to Delhi."

164. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Punjab*, p. 260.
165. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

Give up your head, but forsake not those whom you have undertaken to protect. Says Tegh Bahadur, sacrifice your life, but relinquish not your faith.

166. *Adi Granth*, p. 1428.

"Ram passed away, Ravan passed away with his large family; Saith Nanak,

nothing is permanent; the world is like a dream."

167. Latif; *op. cit.*, p. 260.

168. Satbir Singh, *The Sikh Review*, January, 1975 A.D., p. 54.

"We have it on the authority of Ghulam Husain's *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin* that Aurangzeb himself ordered that Guru Tegh Bahadur be killed and parts of his body amputated and hung about the city."

169. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

He quoted *Bhat Vahi* which says: "Jaita, son of Agya Ram, Nanu, son of Bagha, Uda, son of Khema, grandson of Parma, brought Guru's head to Kiratpur in Parganah Kahlur on the tenth moonlit day on Mangsar, 1732. It was cremated at Makhawal on the eleventh.

170. Harbans Singh, *The Sikh Review*, January, 1982, pp. 44-45, 55-56. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 37.

171. Kartar Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 37. He quoted the *Bhat Vahi Jadavansian* which says:

Lakhi, son of Godhu, Nagahia, Hema and Hari, sons of Lakhi, Naik Dhuma, son of Kahna, Tumar Bijlant picked up the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 9th Guru, and cremated it in Raesina village 12 minutes before dawn (Because cremation at night was prohibited).

172. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

Two shrines serve as memorial of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom. One stands at the best place in old Delhi near the Red Fort and the other at the most notable place in New Delhi, facing Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Parliament House and the Central Secretariat.

173. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

174. Saqi Must-id-Khan, *Masir-e-Alamgiri*, translated Sir J.N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

175. Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

176. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 392.

ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੂ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾਕਾ।
ਕੀਨੋ ਵਡੋ ਕਲੁ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਕਾ।
ਸਾਧਨ ਹੇਤਿ ਇਤਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰੀ।
ਸੀਸ ਦੀਯਾ ਪਰੁ ਸੀ ਨਾ ਉਚਰੀ।
ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ।
ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ ਸਿਰਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ।

ਠੀਕਰ ਫੋਰ ਦਲੀਸ ਸਿਰ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪੁਰ ਕੀਓ ਪਯਾਨ।
ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਸੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਕਰੀ ਨਾ ਕਿਨਹੂ ਆਨ।
ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਕੇ ਚੱਲਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਗਤ ਕੋ ਸੋਗ।
ਹੈ ਹੈ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਜੱਗ ਭਯੋ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਸੁਰ-ਲੋਕ।

177. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

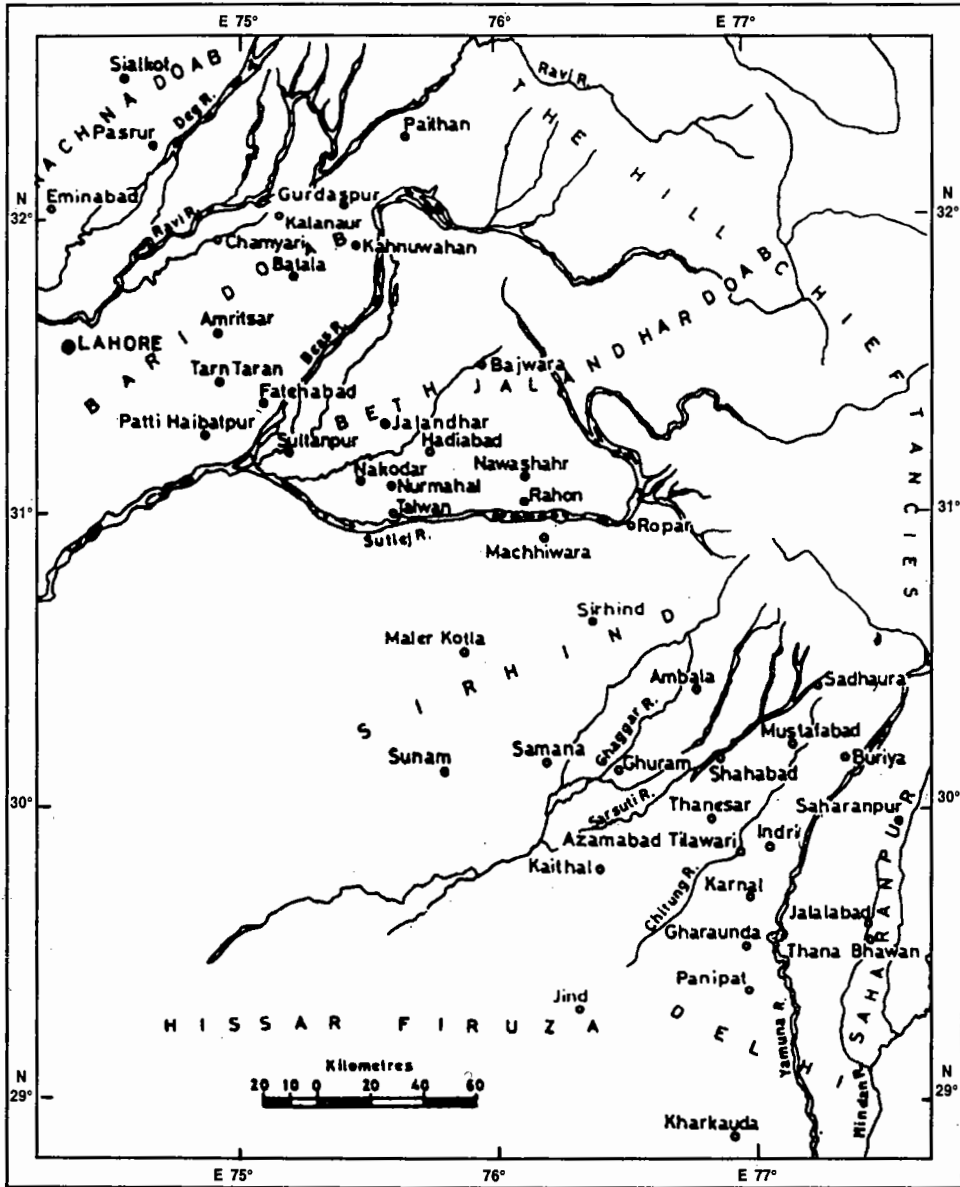
178. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 74.
179. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
180. Parkash Singh, *Spokesman Weekly*, New Delhi, 1970, p. 41.
181. Narang; *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.
182. Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
183. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
184. Banerjee, Indubhushan, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
185. *Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla*, I, 1677-79, quoted by Teja Singh, Ganda Singh in *A Short History of the Sikhs*, I, p. 65.
186. Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 4-5.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
188. Amar Singh Sher-e-Punjab, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 30. Kartar Singh Kalaswalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
189. Hutchisru and Vogel, *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Vol. II, quoted by Kartar Singh Kalaswalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-90.
190. *Ibid.*, p. 503.
191. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of Sikhs*, p. 63.
192. Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 29.
193. Sadhaura is situated at the foothills, 16 kilometres south of Paunta and 42 km east of Ambala.
194. Kartar Singh Kalaswalia, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
195. Kahan Singh, Mahan Kosha, Sukha Singh, Gur Bilas, Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 77. Kartar Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh and the Mughals*, pp. 53-54.
196. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 77.
197. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
198. *Bichitra Natak*, Section VIII, Chaupai 3. Quoted by Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 235.
199. Kalaswalia calls him Lal Chand, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-19.
200. Also see *Bichitra Natak*, section IX, Chaupais 1-24, Sainapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*.
201. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, p. 54. Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, pp. 459-60.
202. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 55. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 90. Consider Dilawar Khan, Governor of Kangra. *Panth Prakash*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 8. Consider Dilawar Khan Governor of Kashmir. Santokh Singh, *Suraj Prakash*. Consider Dilawar Khan, Subedar of Lahore.

203. Kalaswalia, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
204. *Bichitra Natak*, Section X, Chaupais 1-10. Kalaswalia, *op. cit.*, p. 137. Sainapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*, p. 17.
205. *Bichitra Natak*, Section XI, Chaupais, 1-69. Kalaswalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-41. Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, p. 18.
206. *Akhbarat-e-Darbar-e-Mualla*, I, 1677, 1699, quoted by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh in *Short History of the Sikhs*, I, p. 65, fn. 2.
207. Sharma, Sri Ram, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 146.
208. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
209. *Bichitra Natak*, Section XII, Chaupais 1-12.
210. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 4.
211. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
212. *Kalgidhar Chamatkar*, p. 173. Kalaswalia, pp. 130-45, as quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
213. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, pp. 124-26.
214. Sainapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*, p. 49.
- Bhej diyo likh kai on ne,
Ab chhoro Guruji Bhum hamari
Kai kachhu dam daya kar dev,
Kai yudh karo.
215. Kartar Singh, *The Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 179.
216. Sukha Singh, *Gur Bilas*, p. 13. See Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, the siege lasted for two months, p. 284.
217. *Sau Sakhi*, pp. 20-21, 27. *Suraj Prakash*, pp. 5335-36.
218. Macauliffe, Vol. V, pp. 153-156.
219. *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 162-64.
220. Narain Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh, Retold*, p. 229.
221. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
222. *Ibid.*
223. Muhammad Akbar, *The Punjab under the Mughals*, p. 219.
224. Ganda Singh, *Hukamname, Guru's Hukam Namah*, No. 60, p. 181.
225. *Akhbarat-e-Darbar-e-Mualla*, dated May 13, 1710, quoted by Ganda Singh in his *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, I, p. 83. Also see Sainapat, 1925, pp. 58-64.
226. See Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 289. Also see Santokh Singh, *Suraj Prakash*, pp. 5817-18.

227. Santokh Singh, *Suraj Prakash*, pp. 5819-22.
228. *Ibid.*
229. *Ibid.*, pp. 5834-38.
230. *Ibid.*, pp. 5838-41.
231. Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-68.
232. Sainapat, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-74.
233. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 293.
234. *Zafar Nama*, lines 19-41.
235. Ganda Singh, *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, pp. 1-8. Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
236. *Zafar Nama*, lines 19-40.
237. Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Sikh Martyrs*, p. 67.
238. *Ibid.*
239. Chhabra, G.S., *Advanced History of the Punjab*, p. 303.
240. *Kalgidhar Chamatkar*, p. 670, Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 297.
241. Ganda Singh, *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, pp. 61-63. Quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
242. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
243. Sainapat, pp. 75-76.
244. Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 299.
245. The *Fateh Nama* and *Zafar Nama* are two independent letters. In *Fateh Nama* the Guru mentions the martyrdom of his two elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh. The *Zafar Nama* refers to the execution of his two younger sons also, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh.
- The mode of meeting Aurangzeb in both the letters is different. In *Fateh Nama* the Guru wishes to meet the Emperor in the battlefield. The *Zafar Nama* seeks negotiations with the Emperor in Malwa. *Fateh Nama* is a letter from a military leader and *Zafar Nama* from a religious precept. The *Zafar Nama* tells us in unmistakable terms that one should not lose courage even when faced against heavy odds, that peace is desirable but not without honour, that in negotiations compromise is essential but not on the terms of the dictator, give and take being the basic feature of a compromise.
246. Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 306.
247. Sagoo, Harbans Kaur, *Mai Bhagoo*, See Gill, M.K., *Guru Mahal te Hore Bibian* (ed.) pp. 145-173.
248. Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, pp. 301-04.

249. Sagoo, H.K., *Baba Deep Singh Shaheed*, See Gill, M.K. *Shahidi Pramptra te Sikh Itihas* (ed.) pp. 119-40.
250. Ganda Singh, *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, pp. 74-75. Quoted by Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 312.
251. *Ahkam-e-Alamgiri*, pp. 7-9, quoted by Gupta, H.R. p. 312.
252. Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 312.
253. It lies on the Ring Road now called Mahatma Gandhi Road.
254. Jodh Singh, *Shri Kalgidhar Hulas*, pp. 20-25.
255. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6.
256. Sainapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*, p. 119.
257. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
258. Daulat Rai, *Biography of Guru Gobind Singh* (Urdu) Quoted by Kartar Singh in *Guru Gobind Singh and the Mughals*, p. 108.
259. Translation by Ganda Singh. Quoted by Gupta, H.R., pp. 312-15.
260. Sainapat, *Sri Guru Sobha*, p. 121. Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, p. 313.
261. Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 235.
262. Khushwaqt Rae, *Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, 1812, folio, 36a. Daulat Rae, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 231. Bhai Jodh Singh, *Sri Kalgidhar Hulas*, pp. 256-58. Quoted by Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 320.
263. Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 208.
264. Archer, J.C., *Ibid.*, p. 208. Archer and many others call him Gul Khan, a grandson of Pinda Khan killed in a battle by Guru Hargobind. He is the same person as Jamshed Khan, a spy of Wazir Khan and later on of Emperor Bahadur Shah as well. Also see, Jodh Singh, *Sri Kalgidhar Hulas*, p. 270.
265. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-lubab*, Vol. II, p. 551.
- He says that the assailant of the Guru was not discovered. On the other hand, the Guru was held responsible for the murder of Pathan Jamshed Khan whose son was granted a Khilat and compensated for the loss of his father.
266. Mirza Muhammad Harisi, *Ibrat Nama*, p. 67.
- Sayyid Muhammad Qasim Husaini, p. 36 state that Gobind Singh was assassinated during the expedition by a Pathan soldier and he died of his wounds in 1708, at the town of Nanded without leaving any male issue.
- George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, p. 263. Nanak Chand Naz, *Bichitra Natak*, p. 200.
267. Daulat Rae, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 232-35. Hakim Ram Kishan, *Janam Sakhi Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 198-201.

268. Macauliffe, Vol. V, p. 244.
269. Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
270. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 59.
271. *Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla*, quoted by Ganda Singh, *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, Vol. I, p. 83.
272. *Ibid.*
273. Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 90.
274. Narang, G.C., *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 98.
275. *Ibid.*, Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 127.



Parganas affected by Sikh uprisings.

Early Years of Banda Singh Bahadur

The first empire-builder for the Sikhs and a great national hero for the Hindus, a scourge for the tyrants but a man of compassion and generosity for them who supported his political cause—not his religion—was Banda Singh Bahadur. His name in childhood was Lachhman Dev. Max Arthur Macauliffe,¹ William Irvine,² Khushwant Singh,³ Ganda Singh,⁴ Gian Singh,⁵ Karam Singh,⁶ Veni Prasad,⁷ Ganeswar Khurana,⁸ Gopal Singh,⁹ G.C. Narang,¹⁰ Sohan Singh Seetal,¹¹ Satbir Singh,¹² G.S. Chhabra¹³ hold the view that Lachhman Dev was born on October 27, 1670, at Rajauri in district Poonch of western Kashmir. This view is acceptable to most of the authorities on the history of medieval India.¹⁴ Guru Gobind Singh was four years old when Lachhman Dev was born. Banda Singh Bahadur was a great historical personality of the eighteenth century who rose to greatness by dint of his own hard work. His father, Ram Dev, was an ordinary ploughman, Rajput of the Bharadwaj clan.¹⁵ Born in poor circumstances, nothing is known of his early life except that the child, true to the traditions of his race, developed into a youth of very active habits, full of energy and fond of shooting and hunting.¹⁶ He was quick to learn the art of riding, wrestling, archery, and swordsmanship.

As he came from a poor family and lived in a remote village, traditional schooling did not fall to the lot of Lachhman Dev or Banda

Singh Bahadur, because during those days India, more particularly Kashmir, was very backward educationally. There was no school in the area where Banda Singh Bahadur took his birth.¹⁷ Whatever education was imparted during those days was through the *Brahmins*. Even in the twentieth century, there are hardly any learned person of outstanding merit in Kashmir except the *Pundits*. So, it seems, in the early days of his life, Lachhman Dev had no opportunity for regular schooling and he started assisting his father in farming. In his spare time he used to go to the jungles with a bow and arrows for hunting. In due course, he developed this hobby and acquired such a good taste for it that he turned a good hunter and marksman. It was about this time when Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his life in 1675 A.D. when Lachhman Dev was only five years of age. It is possible that the child had heard of the Guru's martyrdom for the protection of the religion and honour of the Kashmiri *Pundits*. It can be inferred safely that the Guru's martyrdom was freely talked about by the people of Kashmir in general, and Kashmiri *Pundits* in particular.

Lachhman Dev was very sensitive. It would be appropriate to quote one event of his life here which revolutionized his life. Once he went for hunting when he was just fifteen years old. It is said that he shot at a doe on the bank of the Tavi river. The pitiable looks of the dying doe struck the tender chords of his heart. But added to this was another and more touching scene. As he cut open its stomach, he saw its two young ones falling from the womb and writhing to death before his very eyes in a few minutes after their premature birth. Something latent moved him still more from within. After this event, he started leading a disappointed and disillusioned life. He had no interest left in worldly affairs. He gave up hunting, eating meat, and resolved to lead an ascetic's life. Meanwhile he came into contact with a *Vaishnava Bairagi* named Janaki Prasad under whose spell he renounced his home and worldly attachments to become an ascetic himself. Janaki Prasad, according to the custom of the *Bairagis*, gave him the new name of Madho Dass.¹⁸ Madho Dass visited various places with his Guru Janaki Prasad and eventually came to the shrine of Baba Ram Thaman, near Kasur (Lahore) at the time of the *Baisakhi* fair in 1686. Here, there were various other groups of *Sadhus*. Madho Dass joined the group led by *Bairagi* Ram Dass and became his disciple. After *Baisakhi*, this group moved from there, visiting various religious places. It came to *Panch Bati* near Nasik. The solitude and calmness of that place acted as a source of attraction to Madho Dass. So he decided to stay there.

It was at Nasik that he formed the acquaintance of an old *Yogi*, Aughar Nath, famous for his attainments in Tantric science.¹⁹ Madho Dass started serving him day and night, taking him as a real Guru. Impressed by his spirit of service and dedication, Aughar Nath started teaching him *Yogic* and occult sciences. He showered all the qualities of *Yog* and *Jantar* on his disciple. Aughar Nath was so greatly impressed by the service of Madho Dass that towards the end of his life he presented his valuable *Yogic Granth* called the *Sidh Anunia*, compiled by a disciple of Guru Gorakh Nath,²⁰ to Madho Dass, and then breathed his last in 1691 A.D.

Being thus accomplished, Madho Dass left the *Panch Bati* woods to establish a monastery of his own elsewhere. In search of a suitable place for it, he moved towards the east of the river Godavari. A calm and quiet place near Nanded²¹ appealed to him the most. So he decided to stay there and made a small hut on the bank of the Godavari.²² He took an austere life and *Tantric practices*, by dint of which he soon became widely popular and greatly respected in the neighbourhood. In a short time a large following of disciples gathered round him and the small hermitage of Madho Dass grew into a regular monastery. He was yet too inexperienced for the life of a saint. Superiority complex overshadowed his virtues. The *sadhus* from far and wide came there and stayed in his *dera* for some time while on their way to places of pilgrimage. In the centre of his *dera*, he had kept a beautiful and luxurious couch (*palang*). Whenever any *sadhu* went there and sat on it, Madho Dass summoned his *birs* (demoniacal champions) and ordered them to overturn the couch, thus throwing the occupant on the ground. This type of insult of *sadhus* pleased Madho Dass and in due course it became his hobby.

He was undoubtedly a mine of energy and enthusiasm, but these were directed in wrong channels, writes Dr. Ganda Singh. "The ore was there in an inexhaustible abundance but was waiting for a refining chemist to separate the dross from the pure metal and to cleanse and polish it with his chemical solutions. It was in this state of suspense that Madho Dass spent some sixteen summers of his life at Nanded. At last the warrior-saint Guru Gobind Singh appeared on the scene in the autumn of 1708 A.D. to reclaim the misdirected energies of the ascetic and make them flow in the channels of the *Khalsa* brotherhood, strenuously working for the emancipation of humanity, suffering under the iniquities and oppressions of the age."²³

In 1708 A.D., Guru Gobind Singh, who was then accompanying Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah in his Deccan campaigns, stopped at Nanded for some time. One day, he went to the monastery of *Bairagi* Madho Dass. He had been told a lot of things about the wonder-working powers of Madho Dass by saint Jait Ram of *Dadu Duara* (Rajasthan in Jaipur State). Jait Ram had himself been ridiculed by Madho Dass. But he was very much impressed by his bravery and told Guru Gobind Singh about him and advised the Guru to meet him. On his arrival at Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh went to his hermitage. Madho Dass was not then present there. The Guru ordered his disciples to kill a few goats of the *Bairagi* and cook meat there and then.²⁴ In the opinion of Khazan Singh, the Guru did so with a view to exciting Madho Dass²⁵ because he was then a vegetarian and it was an act of sacrilege to kill an animal at the *Bairagi's dera*. The Guru took the seat on the couch that Madho Dass had used to discomfort and confound many a saint already. The matter was reported to the *Bairagi*. His resentment was roused, and he rushed back to his hermitage in order to take his revenge upon the offender. The *Bairagi* was red with anger and his fury knew no bounds. He used all his tricks and magic to up-turn the couch on the Guru, but in spite of his very best efforts, nothing would succeed. He was a little gripped with fear by then. He started wondering who the bold new comer could be. He came up to the Guru and looked closely at his face, its brilliant, spiritual light, its majestic, captivating and kindly eyes, abounding in divine grace, his golden plumes, a hawk perched on the thumb of his one hand, his sword hanging from his girdle, a bow tucked on his shoulder, looking a fascinating picture of both stateliness and spirituality harmoniously mingled. The very first look of the Guru had melted his anger and had won him over as an ardent admirer.²⁶

Unable to utter a single word and tongue-tied, the *Bairagi* found his hands joined in obeisance and head lowered in reverence. The kindly Guru smiled and said softly: "You had thrown away your spear, had broken your bow, and crushed your arrows; yet even, now, you have not changed your nature!" Madho Dass raised his eyes just a bit and cast them low again. His body shook from head to toe. He felt as if somebody had come to know his deepest secrets. Taking himself a little in hand and under control, he spoke, not without an effort: "Your holiness, I have lost all my merit and rectitude at the hands of such a high saint as yourself."

The Guru: "What do you mean?"

Madho Dass: "Your honour, I am a confirmed vegetarian saint. You

have killed lives and shed blood in my own house and you have desecrated my seat on which I sit, while worshipping my gods."

The Guru: "Does the shedding of blood profane your seat?"

Madho Dass: "That is the principle of my *Vaishnav* creed."

The Guru: "Is that so in spite of the fact that the blood has flowed in one corner of your large compound while your couch stands in a distant corner? How did that make your seat unhaloed?"

Madho Dass: "Your lordship, when blood has been shed in the hermitage, no seat in any corner of it can escape the curse of impurity."

The Guru: "Then tell me one thing: When in India rivers of blood of its guiltless inhabitants happen to flow over every inch of its soil, how was it that your hermitage in this locality could remain unprofaned so far in spite of it all?"

These words went home and shook him out of complacency. His very soul was shaken out of its deep slumber and all his powers were up in revolt against his past. Thus staggered altogether, he exclaimed: "Well?"

The Guru replied in a firm tone: "That is that."

A new and bright light had dawned in the inner soul of the *Bairagi* now. He bowed and fell at the feet of the Guru and spoke with tears welling in his eyes: "Pardon me, my Lord, I am your humble votary (*Banda*)."

The Guru: "And I am raising my *Banda* (servant) to the status of Banda Singh Bahadur."

Madho Dass: "At your service and at your sacred feet, your Holiness."

The Guru: "My Banda Singh Bahadur, you are a huntsman by nature. Persevere in your vocation of hunting. I am granting to you an unbreakable bow in place of the one that you had broken and discarded once, and the arrows that will break the tyranny of the cruel, absolute ruler of our people. You hunted the helpless animals at one time. Come out now and kill the merciless tyrants of our motherland. I anoint you

to be the protector and saviour of the humble, helpless people from today onward."²⁷

The Guru administered holy, Sikh baptism to Madho Dass with his hands. After taking *Amrit* (the nectar of the double-edged sword) from Guru Gobind Singh, he was named Banda Singh Bahadur. But Macauliffe writes that Banda was named Gurbaksh Singh.²⁸ This statement cannot be verified. There are some authorities, such as Karam Singh, Sohan Singh, Denzil Ibbetson, Edward Maclagan, Khazan Singh and Hari Ram Gupta and others, who are of the opinion that Banda Singh was not initiated into Sikhism by administering the *Pahul*, i.e., he was not administered *Amrit* by the Guru.²⁹ But there exists weightier evidence to show that Banda was administered *Amrit* by the Guru and was then dressed like a Sikh.³⁰ In an instant he was a changed man. He was now no longer a *Bairagi*. He had now become a full fledged Sikh—a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh—a member of the *Khalsa* brotherhood.³¹ He had now found a true preceptor and saviour in Guru Gobind Singh who became the centre of all his religious devotions. His monastic establishment was at once dissolved and he followed his Lord to his camp to prepare for his new mission—a new life.

The Guru instructed him in all the articles of the Sikh creed and its symbols. Banda Singh now learnt with great interest the Sikh scriptures and Sikh history with the help of other Sikhs present there. Within no time he acquainted himself with the early History of Sikhism, the lofty ideals of Guru Nanak,³² Guru Gobind Singh and their efforts in raising a nation of saint-warriors mostly out of the long down-trodden classes of the Punjab. A narration of the stories of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and of Guru Teg Bahadur set his blood boiling with pious indignation. He also witnessed the wholesale persecution of millions of helpless non-Muslim subjects at the hands of the imperial officials. The accounts of the battles of Guru Gobind Singh himself against the hill Rajas and the Mughal imperial armies, given him by the Sikhs, made the muscles of his arms twitch and ready for immediate action. His mind was in revolt and his hands were involuntarily forced to grip his sword. But the doleful tale of the cold-blooded murder of the tenth Guru's younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were *bricked up* alive in a wall and were then mercilessly butchered to death for their refusal to abjure their faith and accept Islam, drew tears from his eyes and drove him into a sort of frenzy. Guru Gobind Singh liked Banda Singh's sensitive nature. He reminded him that "when tyranny had overtaken

men, it was the duty of the more sensitive to fight against it and even to lay down their life in the struggle". This is what Banda Singh Bahadur wanted actually and offered to do as he was bidden. Guru Gobind Singh, who had established the *Khalsa* and wanted to punish the tyrants of the common people, found in Banda Singh a capable person having the capacity to create a sense of shared goals amongst the oppressed people and strengthen the unity of the faith. The meeting between the two great personalities of the age proved to be a very significant event in the history of Punjab in general and in the history of Sikhism in particular.³³

Just in those days Guru Gobind Singh was stabbed by a Pathan named Jamshed Khan.³⁴ The news of this treacherous deed maddened Banda Singh to fury. His blood boiled. He could not now afford to remain inactive. He begged to be allowed to proceed to the Punjab to pull down the tyrannical rulers from their seats of power and accord them codign punishment. Because of physical disability due to the assassin's blow Guru Gobind Singh was not in a position to return to Punjab. Otherwise, of course, he would have gone back from Agra itself, had it not been for his negotiations with Bahadur Shah. He had written to his people on this point in his letter of mid-October 1707 A.D. He had now, therefore, no other course left open to him than to accede to Banda Singh's request and entrust the military command of his people to his charge.

Raj Pal Singh writes in his book³⁵ that in all probability when Guru Gobind Singh realised that his efforts to get justice from the Emperor Bahadur Shah were nowhere near success, he decided to send his men to Punjab under Banda Singh Bahadur to foment trouble there so that he could pressurize the Emperor for an early punishment to Wazir Khan who had killed innocent Sikhs, and thus settle the issue. For this purpose, he decided to commission Banda Singh Bahadur to march upon Punjab and accomplish by force what he had failed to accomplish by an appeal to justice. "Constitutional means and peaceful negotiations not only failed to get justice but also cost Guru Gobind Singh his life. The sword was now the last resort and the duty of using it devolved upon the *Khalsa*, with Banda Singh at their head, of course not as Guru,³⁶ but as commander of the forces of the *Khalsa*."³⁷

At a *darbar* held at Nanded about the middle of September 1708 A.D., the Guru reconfirmed the title of Bahadur on Banda Singh and invested him with full political and military authority as his Deputy to carry on

the national struggle in the Punjab. Dr. Ganda Singh writes that Guru entrusted to him the noble task of continuing the war against the tyrannies and oppressions of his time. And in the execution of that duty, Banda Singh, of course, punished the wrong-doers for the cold-blooded murders of Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh. A *Nishan Sahib* and a *Nagara*, or a flag and drum, were bestowed upon him as emblems of temporal authority. The Guru gave five arrows from his own quiver as "pledge and token of victory". He was given an advisory council of five devoted Sikhs, consisting of Bhais. Binod Singh, Kahan Singh, Baj Singh, Daya Singh and Ram Singh.³⁸ These five Sikhs were appointed to assist him. Twenty more Sikhs were to accompany him to assist him to the theatre of their future war-like activities or to act as his bodyguards. The secret of his success lay, he was told, in his remaining pure of heart and honest. He was not to touch another man's wife, was to look upon himself as a servant of the *Khalsa* who would be his true Guru. He was to undertake no important task without an *ardasa*, or a prayer to the Almighty. Whatever he did, he was to take in it the advice of the "Five Sikhs". Banda was not to found any sect, nor call himself a Guru. He was not to permit his victories to elate him, nor his defeats depress him. These were in brief the instructions which the Guru gave to Banda Singh Bahadur. He was raised to the position of *Jathedar* or leader of the *Khalsa* and strengthened by the Guru's *Hukamnamas* or letters to the Sikhs all over the country to join Banda Singh Bahadur in his war against Mughal tyranny.³⁹ Three hundred Sikh cavaliers in battle array accompanied Banda to a distance of eight kilometres to give him the final send off.⁴⁰

The Guru refused to accompany the Emperor beyond Nanded, as he was severely wounded by a Pathan named Jamshed Khan, set on the Guru by Wazir Khan with the connivance of the court nobles and Emperor himself. The despatch of Banda Singh to the Punjab had infuriated Emperor Bahadur Shah. As a result of his intrigue the Guru passed away on October 7, 1708 A.D. Banda Singh had not gone far when he heard the sad news. This did not discourage him. On the contrary it doubled his zeal and sent the fire of vengeance ablaze in his heart. But he was very careful about the safety of his group on account of Emperor's hostility. He wanted to reach Punjab before the Emperor was free from the revolt of his brother Kam Baksh at Hyderabad. Banda Singh seems to have travelled in disguise and by circuitous routes to avoid detection. Generally, he adopted the same route across Maharashtra and Rajasthan as was followed by Guru Gobind Singh. The distance between Nanded and Hissar in Haryana by that route was 1600 km.⁴¹ At the rate of 16 km. or 10 miles a day on an average, Banda Singh

should not have taken more than 100 days during his journey, but he actually took about a year. It means that he might have been frequently in hiding. The Emperor could have instructed his officers to make short work of Banda Singh and his party, as this much of diplomacy he could not have ignored. That is why Banda Singh travelled right across Maharashtra and Rajasthan, both of which were in revolt against the Mughals.⁴²

On the way, whenever Banda Singh Bahadur remembered the Sikh martyrs and that of the most brutal martyrdom of the two children of the Guru at Sarhind, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, made his blood boil. Their murder by making them stand at a spot while a brick-wall was build around them to suffocate them to death, had shocked him beyond words. It made him grow so agitated and restless as to wish strongly to reach Sarhind in a single day to wreak his vengeance on the tyrannical Nawab there.

They had, thus, reached Bharatpur by steady marches when they were faced with an unexpected hardship, they had exhausted their funds and were yet far from their destination. They were not in a position to take to any law breaking in that territory. All of them, however, joined now in making a prayer to their Guru to help them in this contingency. The prayer had a desired result. Just then a party of Lobana Sikhs turned up there, who were on a business trip to a distant area. They made an offering of their *Daswandh*⁴³ to Banda Singh Bahadur. This was a timely help which enabled him to continue his march without any further embarrassment. They were, thus, enabled to continue their march till they had reached the neighbourhood of Delhi.

In a few months Banda arrived at the frontier of the Delhi province and his speed of march was slightly slowed. Now he had to proceed carefully. Here he paid attention to winning people to his camp. So he started organizing assemblies of the people. Gradually, his popularity increased and people flocked to him, taking him as the representative of Guru Gobind Singh. He started praying for the welfare of the audience and also started giving financial help to the needy. The latter device further added to his popularity. In this connection, Ganda Singh writes: "He (Banda Singh) prayed for the prosperity of all who visited him and enjoined upon the hearts of all who met him. His generosity knew no bounds. He paid all in gold mohars, of which he had some piles ready by his side."⁴⁴

In Hissar district, called the Bangardesh, where Banda Singh was in October 1709 A.D., he was well-received by the Hindus and Sikhs as a leader of the nationalist movement and deputy of Guru Gobind Singh. Liberal offerings were made to him in the cause of the country and *dharma* (religion and virtue) which he distributed among his followers and the poor and the needy. Banda Singh Bahadur had so far been quiet and had followed the policy of non-interference in the affairs of others. This, however, he could not continue for long. Bangar in those days was notorious for occasional visitations of professional dacoits. So, in this region, he took to suppressing dacoits and robbers, seized their booty and gave it to the poor people (as Banda Singh was advertised as a man of wealth, gang of dacoits hovered round his camp). This noble act of bravery was the beginning of the glorious, though short, career of this hero. It won him great fame in the neighbourhood and he was occasionally called upon to protect villages from plundering parties. It was publicly proclaimed by the waving of scarf,⁴⁵ that he undertook to protect the poor and the helpless against all professional robbers and official tyrants, and that he expected no reward from the people in lieu of the service rendered except the simple necessities of life, such as rations and "milk and curd". He further invited people into the fold of the *Khalsa* Brotherhood and promised them a share in the conquered lands.⁴⁶ This, however, was very distasteful to the *Chaudhris* of the *ilaqa* who were, as a rule, in league with officials on one hand, and bad characters, on the other. They generally had as their share a fixed percentage from the total proceeds of their successful raids. Complaints were, therefore, made by them to the local *Amils*. But before they could take any action, Banda Singh moved on into the *pargana* of Kharkhauda and established himself near the villages of Sehri and Khanda.⁴⁷ Never perhaps in the history of Punjab did the circumstances of the time offer so fair a field to the ambitions of a leader, conscious of great talents and called to the command of a warlike people only too eager to support him in any enterprise he might undertake. The Emperor was away in the Deccan, and many of his notable chiefs and commanders had been killed in the recently fought civil war. The governors of Delhi, Sarhind, Lahore and Jammu acted independently and had no cooperation among themselves. Banda Singh directed his attention to the east towards Delhi. There were two more motives behind move. He wanted to leave Mata Sahib Deva in Delhi and plunder the government officials and rich people of the fertile area of Haryana. From Kharkhauda, about 50 km north-west of Delhi, Mata Sahib Deva was sent to Delhi under proper

escort of Bhai Mani Singh, the most trusted man of Guru Gobind Singh, to join Mata Sundari, who was leading the *Khalsa* in the midst of such adversities.⁴⁸ Like the fight against the dacoits, Banda Singh exhorted his audience to fight against injustice and tyranny of the Mughal rulers. People responded admirably to his call. His number began to swell.

From here, he despatched the Guru's letters to the Sikhs of the Malwa, the Doaba and the Majha districts of the Punjab, calling upon them to join him in the laudable object of uprooting the tyrannous rule of the intolerant Mughals. His companions from Nanded, as well wrote a large number of letters to the leading Sikhs all over the country, telling them that Banda Singh Bahadur had been appointed by the Guru himself as *Jathedar* of the *Khalsa* and that it behoved every true Sikh to fall in under his banner. To appeal to the sentiments of the people, they reminded them of the cruel death of the two sons of the Guru at Sarhind and exhorted them to join in punishing *Faujdar* Wazir Khan of Sarhind and his *Peshkar* Sucha Nand, who had so cruelly butchered the young children. This produced a miraculous effect upon the minds of the Sikhs who were already burning with rage against them for these atrocities.⁴⁹

The Sikhs responded to the call. They began to pour in from all quarters, which alarmed the Mughal officials, particularly the *Faujdar* of Sarhind, Wazir Khan, who feared them the most. Immediately he issued orders to watch the roads and river fords and to obstruct the passage of the northern Sikhs into the Malwa districts. Therefore, the southern Sikhs were the first to join Banda Singh Bahadur. Next to the *banjaras*, who came in with a train of bullocks laden with ration, joined Bhai Fateh Singh, a descendant of Bhai Bhagtu, Karam Singh and Dharam Singh of Bhai Rupe, Nigahia Singh and Chuhar Singh, with as many followers as they could collect. Many *Jat* and *Barar* Sikhs of the neighbourhood and Bangar territory came of their own accord. Although *Chaudhris* Ram Singh and Tilok Singh, the ancestors of the Phulkian chiefs, could not join in person, they liberally contributed in men and money. A large number of professional robbers and soldiers of fortune who anticipated a large booty from the condemned city of Sarhind also joined the holy warriors. Ali Singh, Mali Singh and other Sikhs of Salaudi (in the service of Wazir Khan) also volunteered themselves to fight in the name and for the cause of their Guru. Many other well-known Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh joined hands with Banda Singh to wreak vengeance on the enemies of the Guru. A large number of irregulars also joined the *Khalsa* army in the hope of getting a rich booty. Thus, Banda Singh, before he

actually started fighting, had got a large following to the tune of several thousand armed men. In two or three months' time, writes Khafi Khan, "four to five thousand pony riders and seven to eight thousand war-like footmen joined him". Day by day their number increased and abundant money and material by pillage fell into their hands.⁵⁰

News now arrived that the Sikhs from the Majha and the Doaba had collected in great numbers in the hills at Kiratpur on the other side of the Sutlej, and that their passage was blocked by the Pathans of Maler Kotla and Rupar. They had to suffer under a great disadvantage on account of the long distance they had to cover, and for the shortage of funds for the expenses of the journey. Their difficulties were further aggravated by the fact that the fords of the Sutlej were guarded against them. Bhai Peshaura Singh and Kishora Singh, merchants of Kiratpur, were, however, of great service to them in running a *Guru Ka Langar* and supplying them with food and money. On receiving their message, Banda Singh Bahadur sent word to them to stay on where they were and not to advance out of their safe position until they received instructions from him to that effect.⁵¹

In the opinion of Gokul Chand Narang, Banda Singh's army consisted of three categories of persons. The first were the true and loyal Sikhs, who had sat at the feet of Guru Gobind Singh himself and had rallied round Banda Singh in a spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice to carry on the crusade against the enemies of their race and religion. The second consisted of mercenaries who had been recruited and sent to Banda Singh by such chieftains as Ram Singh and Tilok Singh of the Phool family who, not being quite hopeful about the success of the new movement, did not like to run the risk of losing court favour and their possessions and could not take the risk of joining personally the army of Banda Singh. They secretly paid for the arms and accoutrements (military dress, arms and equipment, etc.) of large bodies of troops and keeping themselves in the background, continued to help the movement in a secret way. The third category comprised the irregulars who were attracted to Banda Singh for their love of booty and plunder. They were professional robbers and dacoits, men of reckless daring who joined the movement with the object of looting cities.⁵²

Banda Singh's appeal to the oppressed and the news of the death of the tenth Guru, created a highly inflammable situation in Punjab. The sustained persecution of the Sikhs including murder of Guru Gobind

Singh attracted the attention of the people in general on their ideology with the result that many of them turned sympathisers of their cause and quite a big segment of them joined the *Khalsa*. According to Khushwant Singh, "at that time the distinction between a formally baptised 'Singh' and a Hindu who while retaining his Hindu name and practices, was in close sympathy with the *Khalsa*, was not great".⁵³ This swelling of the ranks of his followers emboldened Banda Singh Bahadur to throw an open challenge to the Mughal empire by attacking Sonapat, not far off from the imperial seat of power Delhi. He entered Sonapat looted the state treasury and the homes of the rich, and distributed whatever he got among his men. At this time, Bahadur Shah was still busy in Deccan fighting his brother Kam Baksh. Banda Singh Bahadur had targetted important commercial towns and trading centres before attacking the governor of Sarhind with a view to collect sufficient amount of money for paying his army and also for purchase of war material. Secondly, by defeating the *faujdar* and other imperial officials stationed in these fortified towns, he wanted to weaken the chances of reaching immediate reinforcement to the help of Wazir Khan from the surrounding areas.

Samana was the object of Banda Singh's next attack. While on their march, Banda Singh received a report in the neighbourhood of Kaithal that a large amount of imperial treasure, revenue collections of those districts, was being taken to Delhi, escorted by a small guard which had halted at village Bhuna. Banda Singh thought it to be a golden opportunity not to be missed. So he hastened to that village, fell upon the guard, put them to death and took possession of the treasure.⁵⁴

The report of Banda Singh's raid was sent to the Governor of Kaithal. He at once reached the spot with all his soldiery and mounted constabulary to meet the Sikhs, whom he found a strong match. But the Sikhs were being handicapped because of their being on foot and the *Amil's* forces being on horses. Banda Singh hit upon a plan, according to which they all entered the neighbouring wood and hid themselves there. The wood being full of thorny bushes, the enemy's force found it difficult to search for them while mounted on horses. So they got down from their horses and started the search. Banda Singh at once gave a signal to his men, who came out, caught the horses and appeared before the dismounted imperial force, thus surprising them. This tactics was one of the fundamentals of war. Many were put to sword and others took to their heels, leaving the *Amil* behind. The *Amil* was captured by the Singhs. He was later released on the condition of making over all horses to Banda Singh's comrades to which he readily agreed. The loot was

distributed by Banda Singh proportionately among the followers, and also the gang he had invited. This convinced everyone of the unselfishness of their gallant leader. Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikhs were greatly encouraged by these small but successful beginnings.⁵⁵

It is clear that so far, except a small number of Sikhs from the surrounding areas, Banda Singh Bahadur had not received any help from the Sikhs of central Punjab. Therefore, it was perhaps Banda Singh's primary aim to attack Samana so as to attract the active help of the Sikhs from their heartland.⁵⁶ Jalal-ud-Din, the executioner of Guru Tegh Bahadur, was the native of Samana. In addition, the killers of the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh at Sarhind, Shashal Beg and Bashal Beg, also belonged to this town. Ali Husain, who by false promises had lured Guru Gobind Singh to evacuate Anandpur, also belonged to Samana. It was an accursed place in the eyes of the Sikhs. The entire peasantry of the neighbourhood was now up in arms and Banda Singh's following had risen to several thousand.⁵⁷

Samana was one of the richest towns in those days and was expected to yield a booty large enough to free them from the anxiety of enormous expenses required to equip them for their future military operations. It was well-fortified by a strong wall and every *haveli* of Amirs of high rank was a fortress in itself. The *Faujdar* of Samana, it appears, was confident that he could repulse the attack of any enemy outside the city walls, and that even if besieged, the impregnability of his fortifications would force the enemy to raise the siege and retire. He paid no attention, therefore, to the rumours of an attack by the Sikhs, whose levies, he thought, were too raw to stand against his brave and disciplined soldiers. But he was soon disillusioned, when on the morning of November 20, 1709, A.D., Banda Singh Bahadur and his men suddenly rushed upon the town from a distance of about 10 *kos* and entered it from all sides before the gates could be closed against them. The inhabitants were massacred in cold blood and the town was thoroughly squeezed. So the beautiful town of Samana, with its palatial buildings, was converted into a heap of ruins, never to regain its past glory. Samana was the district town and had nine *parganas* attached to it. It was placed under the charge of Fateh Singh as Banda Singh was very much impressed by the daring spirit and bravery of Bhai Fateh Singh, who rightly deserved the credit given to him for his distinguished service in this first important victory. Although Kaithal had also been formally conquered, Samana had generally been called by historians the first regular conquest of Banda Singh Bahadur and the first administered unit of Banda Singh, of course. A large quantity of gold,

arms and ammunition fell into his hands while everybody fighting under him became rich and prosperous.⁵⁸ Fateh Singh was given a body of troopers to maintain peace and order.

Wazir Khan of Sarhind was much alarmed to hear the news of invasion and occupation of Samana by the Sikhs. Wazir Khan was well aware that his capital could not escape a similar fate for long. He was, therefore, busy in making preparations to ensure that the fate of Samana did not befall Sarhind. He was concerting every possible precautionary measure to avoid this catastrophe, and was collecting every bit of information about the military strength and resources of the Sikhs. He sent his spies to Samana for the purpose. Banda Singh, on the other hand, was no less vigilant, and when information was brought to him about the spies in the *bazaar*, he ordered them to be brought before him. One of them was without an eye and the other without a hand. Both of them were given a terrible shoe-beating and were then sent away with a message for Wazir Khan, asking him to get ready to meet the advancing *Khalsa* like a brave soldier.⁵⁹

The swift success of his army did not turn Banda Singh's head. He planned his next move wisely and executed them boldly. He knew they were not strong enough to risk a battle with a much greater force of the *Faujdar*, far better equipped and provisioned. Wazir Khan possessed a long train of field artillery,⁶⁰ consisting of heavy guns and zambooraks, and his city was well-fortified. The *Khalsa*, on the other hand, were only equipped with swords and spears, the number of matchlock men among them being hopelessly small. To provide the Sikhs with all the necessary implements of war with his limited resources when he was surrounded by enemies on all sides, was out of question. His success, he thought, mostly depended upon the increase of his strength in men, brave and self-sacrificing like the heroes of Chamkaur. This could only be effected on the arrival of the Majha and the Doaba Sikhs from across the Sutlej where they were held up by the Maler Kotla and Rupar detachments. With this object in view, Banda Singh set out in the eastern direction towards Kiratpur by a long circuitous route. On the way, Banda Singh invaded Ghuram and Thaska. Shahabad, inhabited by Muslim Ranghars, notorious for rape and rapine, were destroyed next. Damala was the village of those Pathans who had deserted Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. It was ravaged.⁶¹ Mustafabad, 40 km south-west of Ambala, was also attacked and it fell before Banda Singh and the *Khalsa* without much resistance. The officers were punished for their tyranny and oppression:

The next target for attack was the cruel *Zamindar* of Kapuri village, Qadam-ud-Din. The *Zamindar* was a moral-wreck of the worst type and stories of his profligacy were still, after the lapse of about three centuries, current in Kapuri and its neighbourhood. There was hardly a beautiful Hindu woman there whose chastity had not been destroyed by this depraved ruler. His *sawars* prowled over the territory, waylaying Hindu marriage parties and snatching away young brides. Thus Qadam-ud-Din was a terror to the non-Muslims of the region.⁶² Banda Singh Bahadur immediately pounced upon Kapuri, killed him and captured his fort. Even by then, the Sikhs from Doaba and Majha had not been able to cross the Sutlej and join Banda Singh Bahadur. But by his bold actions Banda Singh Bahadur had received a substantial booty and war material.

Banda Singh's next expedition was against Sadhura. Its ruler, Osman Khan, was notorious for the oppression of his subjects. He was the same man who had tortured to death the great Muslim saint Sayyed Badar-ud-Din-Shah, popularly known as Sayyed Budhu Shah, simply because he had helped Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. The Hindus of this place were subjected to every kind of indignity. Even their dead were not allowed to be burnt. The Hindus complaint to him that "the Muhammadans slaughter cows in our lanes and streets, nay before our very houses and leave their blood and entrails there; they do not permit the Hindus to perform their religious ceremonies". Banda Singh and his companions now everywhere appeared to be "the defenders of the faith". So this highhandedness infuriated Banda Singh Bahadur and he ordered the attack of Sadhaura.

With the advance of Banda Singh and the Sikhs upon Sadhaura, the aggrieved peasantry and many others of the neighbourhood, who were only waiting for a favourable chance for rising, swelled the number of the invaders and rushed into the town. The angry mob, uncontrollable even by Banda Singh, set fire to the mausoleum of Qutab-ul-Aqtab, and a bloody battle ensued in the streets. The frightened *Sayyeds* and *Shaikhs* had taken shelter in the *haveli* of Shah Badar-ud-Din, probably on the presumption that, as the martyred Sayyed had been a friend of the late Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs might spare their lives. But the Sikhs were powerless. They were comparatively small in number and unknown to the place. It was mostly the infuriated peasantry, inspired by a spirit of revenge against their persecutors, that worked havoc here as elsewhere. They had silently and helplessly suffered under the oppression of these people for years, and now, when their chance came, nothing short of a wholesale massacre could satisfy them. All the inmates of the *haveli* were

indiscriminately put to the sword and, on this account the place is up to this day called the *Qatalgarhi* or slaughter house.⁶³

After having punished Osman Khan and captured Sadhaura, Banda Singh now hurried in the north-westerly direction to relieve the northern Sikhs who had collected on the other side of the Sutlej near Kiratpur,⁶⁴ and were anxiously waiting for his orders. Now Banda Singh sent his message to the *Majhail* Sikhs at Kiratpur, saying that they were to proceed towards Kharar, while he himself was advancing to Banoor. On his way, Banda Singh occupied the small town of Chhat, on the appeal of the Hindus for protection against the aggressions of the local Muslims and complained of their usual highhandedness in the most pitiful language. Their loose morality and religious intolerance were a terror to their (Hindus) honour and faith. Banda Singh Bahadur after its occupation, placed it under a Sikh *Amil*.

However small these victories may be, they certainly encouraged the followers of Banda Singh, boosted their morale, and attracted others to come under his banner. These victories served as a stepping stone to a bigger one to follow, i.e., the victory of Sarhind. After the conquests of Sonepat, Kaithal, Samana, Shahabad, Mustafabad and Sadhaura, Banda Singh Bahadur had appointed his own men as *Amils*, responsible for their civil and military administration and, thus, had acquired political power in the recently conquered region. These activities of the *Khalsa* under Banda Singh alarmed Wazir Khan of Sarhind and he repeatedly wrote to the Emperor to secure reinforcement, telling him that the rebels under Banda Singh Bahadur had emerged triumphant everywhere. The petitions of Wazir Khan were brought to the notice of the Emperor as early as February 25, 1710, A.D., and *farmans* were issued to the *faujdar* of Emnabad on April 28, 1710, A.D., that he should in collaboration with Rustam Khan, the Diwan of Lahore province, chastise all the followers of Nanak. Again, on May 12, 1710, A.D., on learning about the activities of the Banda Singh, the Emperor issued orders that "the *faujdar* be urgently told to take action against them". However, no *faujdar* could extend help to Wazir Khan because they had themselves become helpless due to rebellion in their own realms.⁶⁵

Banda Singh Bahadur knew about the fatal consequences if he delayed any more the attack on Sarhind. Therefore, he advanced from Sadhaura towards Banoor and the Sikhs from the central districts of the

Punjab, after crossing the Sutlej, arrived at Kiratpur. Wazir Khan tried to block the arrival of the Majha and Doab Sikhs towards Sarhind with the help of Nawab Sher Mohammad of Maler Kotla. He tried in vain to blockade the Sikhs' advance towards south as his forces were easily defeated by the Sikhs at Ropar. His three brothers, Khizar Khan, Nashtar Khan and Wali Muhammad Khan were killed, and he himself was wounded. The sikhs now won the day. On the enemy's defeat and flight, the left-over arms, ammunition and ration fell into the hands of the Singhs. Now without loss of time, they hurried southward to join their leader as early as possible. While the northern Sikhs were fighting with the Afghans of Maler Kotla, Banda Singh had marched upon Banoor which offered him no appreciable resistance and fell before him without striking a blow. Banda Singh, at this time, was highly pleased to hear about the glorious victory of his gallant allies at Ropar and marched out a few miles from his camp to receive them. The memorable junction took place between Kharar and Banoor on the Ambala-Ropar road.⁶⁶

Reinforced thus, Banda Singh was in no mood to lose time for his final assault on Sarhind. The ultimate aim of Banda Singh was to punish Wazir Khan and the conquest of Sarhind, where the two innocent sons of Guru Gobind Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were bricked up alive by Wazir Khan at the instance of Sucha Nand *Khatri* and through the treachery of Gangu *Brahmin*, the servant companion of the Guru's mother and the two *Sahibzadas*. Thus, owing to his own sins and the news of Banda's victories, Wazir Khan was passing sleepless nights. The Sikhs anxiously looked forward to the happy prospect of the holy crusade against the condemned city of Sarhind and its Governor, while the number of plunderers who followed the Sikhs to prey upon the countless riches that were supposed to have been amassed in the city during many centuries, was steadily increasing. It was this class of people who were mostly responsible for indiscriminate murder and plunder during these expeditions. They were the most dangerous and unreliable allies and were not unoften seen deserting Banda Singh in the thick of battle wherever they feared a defeat. Preparation for an attack on Sarhind were soon made. This infused a new spirit in the minds of the *Khalsa*. Fearing this, the Nawab of Sarhind caused the nephew of his Hindu Wazir, Sucha Nand to force his way along with a thousand trained men into Banda Singh's camp pretending loyalty to him but to put him to death at the earliest possible opportunity. Banda Singh, a man of simple faith, put trust in his word and accepted him and his force.⁶⁷ In the meantime, Wazir Khan concerted every possible measure for the protection of Sarhind and himself. He combined with him four or five

noted *faujدارs* and *zamindars* and to collect as large a number of men as could possibly be, so he had proclaimed *Jehad*, a religious war, against the *kafirs* or infidel Sikhs. A large number of *ghazis* or religious warriors from far and near responded to the call, and in a few days innumerable religious volunteers, in addition to the regular forces of his own and his allies, mustered round him. He collected large stores of lead and gunpowder and mobilized a long train of artillery and elephants to meet the Sikhs. According to Khafi Khan, Wazir Khan was leading a force of 15,000 men.⁶⁸ According to Dr. Ganda Singh, to this may be added the number of the *ghazis*, 5000 at the least.⁶⁹

On the other hand, Banda Singh Bahadur had no artillery and no elephants, nay, not even the required number of horses for all his men. Only a few of his men possessed matchlocks. Long spears, arrows and swords were the only weapons of war that the Sikhs were equipped with. The indomitable courage, an unsurpassable activity of Banda Singh and his devoted Sikhs, however, made up for their meagre resources. He mostly depended for his success upon the spirit that, he knew, would be infused in the minds of his men at the very sight of the city associated with cold-blooded murder of the young sons of their prophet. The exact strength of the Sikh force cannot be ascertained, though, according to Khafi Khan, the number of the Sikhs before the invasion of Sarhind had increased to thirty or forty thousand.⁷⁰ This number, according to Ganda Singh, was very much exaggerated to show that the Muhammadan force was much less in numerical strength than that of the Sikhs.⁷¹ But their leadership by and large was in the hands of the tried and devout followers of Guru Gobind Singh, like Baj Singh, Fateh Singh, Karam Singh, Dharam Singh, Sham Singh and Ali Singh.⁷² Wazir Khan came out to meet the *Khalsa* with a large force and an innumerable host of crusaders. Both the armies came face to face on the plains of *Chappar-Chiri* on May 12, 1710, A.D.⁷³

Banda Singh Bahadur entrusted the command of his Malwa Sikhs to Bhai Fateh Singh, Karam Singh, Dharam Singh, Ali Singh and Sham Singh, and he himself occupied a place on a mound nearby to watch and direct the movements of the army. As soon as the battle began and the Nawab's artillery opened fire, the robbers and irregulars, who, though, were several thousand, had no common commandant and whom only the love of booty had brought together, took to flight. The next to desert were the one thousand men of the treacherous nephew of Sucha Nand. This caused a little confusion in the Sikh ranks. Baj Singh galloped back to inform Banda Singh of the shaky condition of the battle.⁷⁴ Banda

Singh now rushed forward to the forefront of his army and boldly led them on to the attack. The Sikhs were very much encouraged by this bold movement of their leader and with the loud shouts of *Wahiguru ji ki Fateh*, they fell in a compact body upon the Muhammadans, advanced sword in hand against their line of elephants and brought two of them down. The Muhammadan force was unable to stand the fierce and repeated attacks of the Sikhs and many of them were killed in the battlefield. Sher Muhammad Khan and Khwaja Ali of Maler Kotla were also killed,⁷⁵ and confusion arose in the imperial ranks. Wazir Khan, then eighty years old, made no attempt to escape, but tried to rally his men, and continued to shoot his arrows at the enemy. At last he met Baj Singh and struck at him with his spear. Baj Singh laid hold of it and with it wounded the Khan's horse in the forehead. Wazir Khan then drew his bow and hit Baj Singh, on the arm and drawing his sword tried to make an end of him. Fateh Singh, who was waiting nearby, gave Wazir Khan a cut on his sword belt that wounded him from the shoulder to the waist and his head fell to the ground.⁷⁶ According to Khazan Singh, Wazir Khan fell from his horse and was captured alive. According to Macauliffe⁷⁷ and the author of *Suraj Prakash*,⁷⁸ Wazir Khan was killed by Banda Singh, but with the arrow given to him by the Guru. Dr. Ganda Singh says that Baj Singh snatched the lance from Wazir Khan and struck his horse on the head and wounded it, whereas Fateh Singh, who was standing nearby, thrust his sword at the sword-belt so strongly that passed through his shoulder to his waist and he fell down. The opinion of Historian Karam Singh is different. He says: "The heroes were wielding their swords. Suddenly an arrow struck Wazir Khan and he fell down from his horse."⁷⁹ As soon as Wazir Khan fell down, his army fled. He was caught alive. Karam Singh says that Wazir Khan was then tied with a rope, dragged through the city. When dead, he was tied to a tree for the birds to feast upon the corpse. This view is also endorsed by the author of *Banda the Brave*, when he also says: "His (Wazir Khan's) legs were tied with a rope, he was dragged through the *bazaars* of the town. And when this had been done, he was fastened to a tree where his corpse furnished a feast to kites and condors."⁸⁰ Khafi Khan says that he was struck by a musket ball.⁸¹ *Akhbarat-e-Durbar-e-Mualla*, dated May 13, 1710, stated that the battle began in the morning and lasted until afternoon. Wazir Khan was wounded by arrows and bullets and fell dead. His son and son-in-law also perished.⁸² Latif writes that he was killed by an arrow which pierced his breast.⁸³ Kanhayialal says he was struck by a bullet in breast.⁸⁴ Thus, it is certain that Wazir Khan was killed in the battle of *Chappar-Chiri*. His son, not caring for his father, ran away to Delhi with the members of the royal family, leaving behind him

the hoards of wealth accumulated by his father. On seeing the fall of Wazir Khan's head to the ground, the imperial army took to flight towards Sarhind leaving behind their horses, arms, tents, cannons and other ammunitions of war which were taken over by the Sikhs.⁸⁵ Wazir Khan's head was stuck up on a spear and lifted high up by a Sikh who took his seat in the deceased's howdah. The Sikhs with one voice and in a wild excitement raised the sky-rending shouts of *Sat Sri Akal*. The Muslim troops on beholding the Nawab's head trembled and fled helter skelter in dismay and despair. The Sikhs fell upon them and there was a terrible carnage. Blood flowed freely not only in the battlefield but on a wide tract up to the city of Sarhind.⁸⁶ Wazir Khan's body was dragged up by oxen and was then burnt.⁸⁷ Khafi Khan writes that in the course of flight not a man of the army of Islam escaped with more than his life and the clothes he stood in. Horsemen and footmen fell under the swords of the infidels (Sikhs) who pursued them as far as Sarhind.⁸⁸

Wazir Khan's army was totally defeated and routed. The victorious Banda Singh and his Sikhs were now masters of the field. They ascribed the victory to *Wahiguru*, the Almighty, and their loud and joyous shouts of "*Wahiguru ji ki Feteħ*"⁸⁹ rent the air. They now marched upon the city of Sarhind which was about ten miles from the field of battle, according to Dr. Ganda Singh. The Sikhs reached Sarhind by nightfall. The gates of the city were closed. The guns mounted on the walls of the fort commenced bombardment. The Sikhs laid a siege to the place. They took rest in the night and gained strength for another trial the following day. Wazir Khan's family had already fled to Delhi. Many other well-to-do people ran off with all that they could carry away. Everyone who had been left behind, according to Muhammad Qasim, was taken prisoner. Only those who disguised and hid themselves in the houses of the Hindus, escaped injury.⁹⁰ Sucha Nand, the Hindu *Peshkar* of Wazir Khan, was "one of the principal objects". Severe fighting took place on May 13, 1710, A.D. The fort guns caused great havoc among the Sikhs and about 500 of them lost their lives.⁹¹ The Sikhs in knots were hammering at the gates and the Mughal gunners obviously were playing a losing game. The Sikhs succeeded in breaking open a couple of gates. On May 14, 1710, A.D., Banda Singh's troops entered the town and inside the town destruction of life and property knew no bounds. The sentiments of the crusaders had been very much excited by the cold-blooded murder of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh in this town. And, now, when they entered it after a bloody struggle, the memory of that ghastly scene naturally ignited their fury. Moreover, host of the plunderers who had now rushed in from all sides, could not be restrained and so the city lost

heavily in life and property. The irregulars avenged their personal animosities in a most reckless manner and paid their persecutors in their own coin and, perhaps, with compound interest. Many well-to-do families of the nobles ran off with all that they could carry away.⁹² Sucha Nand suffered an ingominous death and his houses were subjected to a rapacious plunder. "Particularly the hoards and *havelis* of Sachidanand (Sucha Nand)," writes Muhammad Qasim, "had been, as if, amassed and raised for this day. . . . I have heard it from reliable people of the neighbourhood that during the time of the late (Wazir) Khan, there was no *Zullum* (cruelty) that he had not inflicted upon the poor subjects and that there was no seed, of which he now reaped the fruit, that he had not sown for himself."⁹³ The booty that fell into the hands of Banda Singh was estimated at two crores of rupees in money and goods belonging to Wazir Khan and some lakhs belonging to Sucha Nand and others.⁹⁴ Much more money and property was taken away by the irregulars in their carts. Sarhind was a famous commercial and trading centre of the Punjab and was quite prosperous. The Hindu traders and rich merchants had already handed over to Banda Bahadur a big amount of money as ransom to secure his protection against their oppressors. Banda Singh Bahadur proclaimed orders to the effect that none would attack the Hindus of the town.⁹⁵ It is without doubt that Banda Bahadur's victorious army punished Sarhind with unremitting severity and the Sikhs wreaked their vengeance on the city of sins (Sarhind). To contain the fury of the victors, Banda Singh had issued strict orders not to kill even a single animal there.⁹⁶ But plunderers' sense of vengeance on the town prevailed, and this order could not be implemented as desired by him. Several Muslims of note saved their lives by embracing Sikhism. Dindar Khan, son of Jalal Khan Rohilla, became Dindar Singh. The official news writer of Sarhind, Mir Nasir-ud-din, changed his name to Mir Nasir Singh.⁹⁷

The entire province of Sarhind consisting of twenty-eight *parganas*, extending from the Sutlej to the Jamuna and from the Shiwalik hills to Kunjpura, Karnal and Kaithal, yielded 36 lakh rupees annually.⁹⁸ Sarhind came into Banda Singh's possession. Now Banda Singh took in hand the administration of the conquered territories. Baj Singh, his companion from Nanded, was appointed the *Subedar* or the Governor of Sarhind, with Ali Singh as his *Naib*. Bhai Fateh Singh was confirmed in his appointment as Governor of Samana, and Ram Singh, brother of Baj Singh, was appointed Governor of Thanesar jointly with Baba Binod Singh.⁹⁹ All the *faujدارs* of 28 recently conquered *parganas* were replaced by the men owing allegiance to Banda Singh Bahadur.¹⁰⁰

Banda Singh soon became popular as the defender of the faith and the champion of the oppressed. He started holding regular *darbars* where people came and presented to him their grievances. He spared no pains in redressing their wrongs. In this way, he won the sympathy and love of the common man. One day a man named Bulaqa Singh, a Sikh musician, who had for some time been with Ali Singh, complained in an open *Divan* against the Ram Rayias of Ghudani, in the *Thana* of Payal. This village was inhabited by a large number of *Khattris* who were *masands* of the establishment of Ram Rae. One day Bulaqa Singh happened to be at their village. After the evening service of *Rahiras* in the Gurudwara of Guru Hargobind, when he repeated the words *Khalsa Sahib Bolo ji Wahiguru* (name of the Almighty) after the name of Guru Gobind Singh in the prayer, they got annoyed, abused and assaulted him, broke his harp and used insulting language for the Guru.¹⁰¹ It was very hard for Banda Singh to bear this type of insult hurled at the Guru Gobind Singh. Banda Singh at once marched out of Sarhind to punish and teach them a lesson. The Ram Rayias (*masands*) were caught, punished and driven out of the village. Banda Singh Bahadur then established a Sikh *Thana* at Payal and the complainant Bulaqa Singh was appointed its *Thanedar*. The *choudhries* of Gharoti, Dhamot and other neighbouring villages offered *nazranas* to Banda Singh and offered their allegiance.¹⁰²

Banda Singh then marched towards Maler Kotla. In the confusion that had followed the attack upon Guru Gobind Singh after he crossed the Sirsa, Bibi Anoop Kaur, a Sikh maid servant of the house of the Guru, (some historians say that she was the sister of Mata Jito ji) fell into the hands of Sher Muhammad Khan of Maler Kotla and was carried away by him.¹⁰³ The brave Sikh woman, however, sacrificed her life at the altar of her faith and chastity. She thrust a dagger into her heart and committed suicide to save her honour. Sher Muhammad Khan, thereupon, quietly buried her in a grave. Anup Kaur had not embraced the faith of Islam and had died a Sikh. She should, therefore, have been cremated according to Sikh rites. Banda Singh was moved to hear the pathetic story and said that the last remains of the brave Sikh woman should no longer be allowed to rot in a grave. He, therefore, marched upon the town of Maler Kotla. There was no one to oppose his advance. The sons of Sher Muhammad Khan with all their families and

belongings had fled the place. Banda Singh had no intention to destroy Maler Kotla because its ruler Sher Muhammad Khan had advocated mercy for the children of Guru Gobind Singh at the time of their execution at Sarhind and the Guru had blessed him.¹⁰⁴ However insignificant may be the favour done by anyone towards a Sikh, his sense of gratitude is too strong for any feelings of revenge and he would readily forget and forgive the worst of his enemies. It was under this sense of gratitude that the Sikhs never raised even their little finger against the town of Maler Kotla, although the whole of its neighbourhood was trampled under the hoofs of horses and more than once the city of Sarhind was sacked and its magnificent buildings converted into heaps of ruin.¹⁰⁵ At Maler Kotla, Banda Singh met Kishan Das *Bania*, in whose house he spent some time during his previous mendicant excursions. Banda Singh recognised him and embraced him with a sense of gratitude and the *Bania* offered some money to Banda Singh with great respect. Banda Singh was not actuated by any offensive motive in this expedition, as stated above. So the town was left unmolested. He directed his attention exclusively to the last rites of Bibi Anup Kaur. Her body was exhumed and was cremated according to the Sikh rites.¹⁰⁶ Banda Singh Bahadur next proceeded to Raikot. The ruler offered no resistance and acknowledged him as his overlord and is said to have paid him a cash tribute of five thousand rupees.¹⁰⁷

After the receipt of *Nazrana* from Raikot, Banda Singh Bahadur returned to Sarhind. The whole area surrendered to the Sikhs and submitted to the new Sikh administration introduced at Sarhind. From Sarhind, small detachments were sent in all directions to eliminate resistance, if any, to the newly established Sikh administration. Small parties carried expeditions into the north and north-west of Sarhind, and Banda Singh was, in a few days, the undisputed master of the territory from Sadhaura to Raikot and from Machhiwara and Ludhiana to Karnal. After these conquests, the power and prestige of Banda Singh Bahadur increased immensely. He had conquered the area between Jhelum and Jamuna and governed it through his deputies. Such was the spirit of the *Khalsa* and the foresight of their commander that in less than a year of their entry in northern India, Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur converted their struggle into a people's movement and captured Sarhind province along with the surrounding territories.

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3. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 1469-1849, Vol. II, pp. 2-4.
4. Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur*, p. 1.
5. Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsher Khalsa*, quoted by Raj Pal Singh in *Banda Bahadur And His Times*, p. 10.
6. Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, p. 20.
7. Veni Prasad, *Guru Gobind Singh*, quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
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11. Seetal Sohan Singh, *Rise of Sikh Power in the Punjab*, 1982, p. 18.
12. Satbir Singh, *Sada Itihas*, 1994, Vol. 2, p. 14.
13. Chhabra, G.S., *Advanced History of the Punjab*, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 325.
14. James Browne, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Sikhs*, 1788, p. 9.

He says that Banda Singh was the native of a village called Pundary in the Doaba Bist Jullundur of the Punjab.

William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. 1, p. 93 quotes Kanwar Khan and Yahya Khan, who are of the opinion that Banda was a native of village Pandor in the Baith Jullundur Doab.

Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, pp. 2-4. He advanced arguments to show that Banda Bahadur belonged to Sirmaur state, now a district headquarter in Himachal Pradesh.

H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province*, Vol. I, pp. 698-722. He believed that Banda Singh was a Punjabi Khatri from Sialkot district.

K.C. Yadav, *Haryana: History and Culture (Hindi)*, Vol. 1, Delhi, 1992, p. 334, says that Banda Singh was native of some place in Haryana.

15. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
16. *Ibid.*
17. But Banda Singh Bahadur was not illiterate. He was a self-educated man. It is recorded that Aughar Nath, whom Banda Singh had served sincerely at Nasik, had given him a book of *Charms* called *Sidh Anunia* that was nothing but a book

- of *tantras*. It was a very valuable *Yogic Granth*, compiled by a disciple of Guru Gorakh Nath, which was said to be in Sanskrit. So this required a considerable knowledge of Sanskrit for understanding. This shows that Banda Singh knew Sanskrit well. According to Swami Saraswati, "Banda knew Persian and Arabic also. He had also read the Koran." See Saraswati B., *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Raisi (1944), p. 23.
18. Some writers have given him another alias, "Narain Dass", and remember him by this name up to his admission into the Sikh faith.
 19. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
 20. Bhangu, Rattan Singh, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 76. Ibbetson, Maclagan and others, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.W.F.P.*, p. 698.
 21. Previously it was a part of the Hyderabad state, now forms a part of Maharashtra.
 22. Here now stands a famous Gurudwara, known as Gurudwara Banda Ghat, which is at a distance of 3 furlongs from the Gurudwara Langar Sahib towards the west.
 23. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
 24. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 1.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 11. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, Part I, p. 205, Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 78.
 26. A similar view is also expressed by Sohan Singh, the author of *Banda the Brave*, p. 17.
 27. Seetal, Sohan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 28. Macauliffe, M.A., *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.
 29. S. Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, pp. 27-28. Daulat Rai, *Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji Maharaj*. Sir Denzil Ibbetson, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.W.F.P.*, Vol. I, p. 698. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, p. 207. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 4-6.
 30. Dr. Ganda Singh is of the opinion that Banda Singh was baptised by the Guru himself. He opines that "Baptism was a must and a routine of life for *Kesadhari Sikhs*". Dr. Ganda Singh has made this conclusion after consulting the contemporary and near contemporary Persian sources. Dr. Ganda Singh has refuted the contention of the historians (those expressed the view that Banda Singh was not baptised) that Banda Singh was not a baptised Sikh, on the basis of contemporary records. Karam Singh's statement that though Banda Singh had come within the fold of Sikhism, he had no time to take *amrit*, does not hold ground in view of the fact that Banda Singh was with Guru for many days. Dr. Ganda Singh says: "Sardar Karam Singh's *Jiwan Britant Baba Banda Singh Bahadur*" was published in 1907. Research on Indian history was then yet in its infancy, (see, Ganda Singh, *Punjab Past and Present*, October 1988, p. 118) and it seems that he arrived at the conclusion because the relevant records were not available to him. Bhai Santokh Singh opined that Banda Singh was not baptised because he started his own sect. He did not mention that Banda Singh had taken

the baptism from Guru Gobind Singh. He further writes that *Khalsa Panth* did not stand by him as he started his own sect. (see G.P.S.P., Vol. XIV (ed.) Bhai Vir Singh, 1965, p. 6246). But there is no historical truth that Banda Singh had started his own sect. If Banda Singh had done so, none of the eight hundred Sikhs who were with him would have sacrificed their lives. Although Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangu had not clearly mentioned that Banda Singh had taken the *Pahul* from Guru Gobind Singh, but there are instances in his *Panth Prakash* that Banda became the Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh. He writes that Guru Gobind Singh made Banda Singh a member of *Khalsa* brotherhood (see Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangu, S.G.P.P. (ed.) Jit Singh Seetal, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1984, pp. 126-29). So it seems that Banda Singh was a baptised Sikh of the Tenth Master. Banda Singh converted some prominent Muslims like Mir-Nasir-ud-din and Dindar Khan to Sikhism and gave them new names of Mir Nasir Singh and Dindar Singh. And only a baptised Sikh has the authority to baptise others.

Dr. H.R. Gupta is of the opinion that if Banda Singh was baptised, he would not have changed the Guru's salutation of "Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wah Guru Ji Ki Fateh" to "Fateh Darshan". In this connection it may be mentioned that Banda Singh never used the term "Fateh Darshan" against "Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa". Dr. Ganda Singh writes that *Khalsa* had rejected "Fateh Darshan" because they feared that it might be used in place of "Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa" and Banda Singh accepted it. Banda Singh definitely abandoned it after it was rejected by the *Khalsa*. After a careful and critical study of the various contemporary and semi-contemporary sources, one may agree that Banda Singh was baptised by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Dr. Ganda Singh maintains that Banda Singh had become a full-fledged Sikh, a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh and a member of the *Khalsa* brotherhood. (Ganda Singh, *Ibid*, p. 118). M. Gregor has also written that Banda Singh was a baptised Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh, received the *Pahooldee* (*Pahul*) and became a Sikh. *History of the Sikhs*. Further, we may say that it was impossible to become the *Jathedar* of the *Khalsa* without being baptised. Baba Sardul Singh, a descendant of Banda Singh, is also of the opinion that Banda Singh had taken the *Pahul* from Guru Gobind Singh himself. He says: "Our ancestor Baba Banda Singh, popularly known as Banda Bahadur, was regularly baptised as a Singh, having received *amrit* in Nanded in 1705 B.K. from the holy hands of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib" (P.P.P. *Ibid*, p. 139). So Banda Singh was a baptised Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh and there is no doubt about it.

Extract from a statement of Baba Sardul Singh of Dera Baba Banda Singh:

Dera Baba Banda Singh Sahib,
Post-office Raisi, Jammu State,
Dated, 19th Magh, 1891 Bikrami.

"Our ancestor Baba Banda Singh, famous as Banda Bahadur became a Sikh after taking *amrit* at the hands of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded in 1765 Bikrami and thus left the *Bairagi* sect and became the follower of Guru Sahib. After him, his successors became the followers of Guru Sahiban and are so even today.

Sahib Banda Singh Bahadur came to the Punjab on the orders of Guru Gobind Singh and sacrificed his life in carrying out his orders.

During his service, he never claimed himself as the successor of Guru Gobind Singh, and even today his successors are known as *Babas*.

There was never any dispute between Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and the *Khalsa* nor did the *Khalsa* leave him. Instead, up to the last, about 800 Sikhs remained with him and laid down their lives at Delhi and none of them deserted the *Sikh Panth* to save his life.

After Baba Banda Singh's demise, whatever conflict arose between *Tat Khalsa* and *Bandae Khalsa*, had no connection with the personality of Baba Sahib. . . "

Signed Baba Sardul Singh Sodhi
Gaddi Nashin
Dera Baba Banda Singh Sahib
Dated 19 Magh, 1891 Bikrami
I February, 1935

31. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Zikre Guruan Wa Ibtada-i-Singhan wa Mazhab-i-Eshan*, p. 11. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, p. 39, Kanhaiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 56. M. Gregor W.L., *History of the Sikhs*, p. 106, Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 294. Panye, C.H., *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 43. Macauliffe, M.A., *op. cit.*, p. 239. Also see, Ghulam Hussain Khan, Browne Jas, Forster George, Iraeat Khan, Lovett S.V., *Sau Sakhi*, Sardha Ram, Veni Prasad, Shri Ram Briksha Sharma. *Works of Harisi*, Kannwar, Qasim, Malcolm, Gyan Singh, Radha Mohan Gokulji, Shri Surendra Sharma, etc.
32. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
33. Raj Pal Singh, *Banda Bahadur And His Times*, 1998, New Delhi.
34. He was a spy of Wazir Khan and later on of Emperor Bahadur Shah as well. See Jodh Singh, *Sri Kalgidhar Hulas*, p. 270.
35. Banda Singh was one of the most unforgettable characters in medieval Indian history whose role has not yet been put in right perspective before the readers. He was neither a "Guru" nor a sectarian pigmy as some scholars had tried to paint him to be. Rather, the leadership of the Sikhs in their fight against the tyrannical Mughal officers of the *Subas* of Delhi and Lahore, after the assassination of Guru Gobind Singh, was assumed by him at the behest of the Tenth Guru as commander of the *Khalsa* and he lived and died for it.

Dr. Ganda Singh has come to the conclusion that Banda Singh never became Guru after Guru Gobind Singh and he never sat on *Gur Gaddi* at Amritsar (Ganda Singh, p.p.p., p. 17). Kanhaiya Lal is of the opinion that Banda Singh tried to occupy the *Gur Gaddi* at Amritsar. (*Tarikh-i-Panjab*, Jit Singh Sital, Patiala, 1968, p. 53). Dr. Ganda Singh does not find any truth in the viewpoint that Guru Gobind Singh had nominated Banda Singh as a Guru of the Sikhs. Banda Singh had never mentioned himself as Guru in his *Hukamnamas*. Ganda Singh (ed.) *Hukamnama*, Patiala, 1985 (*Hukamnama* of Banda Singh Bahadur dated December 12, 1710 A.D., p. 185). Moreover, Banda Singh after the conquest of Sarhind, issued an official seal and coins in the names of Gurus and not in his own name. Bhai Santokh Singh writes that Guru Gobind Singh nominated Banda Singh as the Jathedar of *Khalsa* and not the Guru of the Sikhs. Banda Singh was simply a *Karinda* (political leader of *Khalsa*). (Bhai Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 6243.)

After a careful analysis of the various sources one cannot agree with Latif that Banda Singh assumed the title of Guru. (*History of the Panjab*, 1964, p. 274). It

seems that Muslim historians did not understand the nature and personality of Banda Singh. To refute the above allegation, Dr. Ganda Singh says that Banda Singh was simply a disciple and not a Guru, because Guru Gobind Singh entrusted the guruship in *Guru Granth Sahib*. So there is no scope for anyone to become the Guru after Guru Gobind Singh. Nowhere in his documents is he mentioned as Guru like the earlier and later pretenders.

36. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Dr. Gopal Singh in his book *A History Of The Sikh People* in its footnotes on page 322 writes that Sahib Kaur accompanied Banda Bahadur up to Delhi and lived there for quite some time. But Dr. Gopal Singh has not given his source of information. According to Santokh Singh, writer of *Suraj Prakash*, when Guru Gobind Singhji realized that he would not survive very long he instructed Mata Sahib Deva not to immolate herself on the funeral pyre, but go to Delhi with Bhai Mani Singh where Mata Sundari was staying, and obeying Guru Gobind Singh she came to Delhi with Bhai Mani Singh separately not with Banda Bahadur.

39. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

The mission of Banda Singh has been generally misunderstood by historians. He is represented to have been commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh to avenge the murder of his sons, just as the Guru himself is said to have prompted in his early days by the desire to revenge the death of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur. There is nothing in the whole history to warrant this conclusion. The Guru never led any offensive expedition against Aurangzeb or any of his local deputies. In all his wars, either against the Rajas of the Sivaliks or against the Mughal officers, whether at Bhangani, Anandpur, Chamkaur or any other place, we always find him on the defensive, taking to the sword as the last resort, in self-defence and for self-preservation. A person of revengeful spirit cannot be expected to render timely help to his bitterest enemies or to the heir-apparent of his father's murderer. He was for above these personal animosities. Those who are acquainted with the tenets of Sikhism, the writings of the Guru and the various events of his life, cannot believe that he could ever have thought of asking any one to avenge the murder of his own sons. Had it been so, Banda Singh's work should have been finished after the defeat and death of Wazir Khan and the sack of Saharanpur, Nanauta and Jalalabad, the Ram Rayias of Ghudani, and the *Faujdar* of Batala and Sultanpur. Banda Singh was thus inspired not with the spirit of revenge, but with the mission of continuing a holy war against the tyrants. His mission seems to have become to extirpate the tyrants and establish perhaps a Sikh Raj in their place (*see* Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*).

40. Gupta, H.R., *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 7.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. Every Sikh is enjoined to set apart one-tenth of his income for religious purposes. This is called *Daswandh*. In the time of the Gurus this was very strictly observed

- and the amount was regularly remitted to the Guru's treasury direct or through accredited *masands*.
44. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
 45. Just as "the beat of drum" is used to attract the attention of people, a scarf was also waived by a person who went from place to place to announce a proclamation. The "waiving of a scarf" was called *Pallu Pherna*.
 46. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 48. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
 49. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.
 50. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, 1874, Vol. II, p. 652. Quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
 51. *Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 98-102.
 52. Narang, G.C., *Transformation of Sikhism*, pp. 100-101.
 53. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 102-7.
 54. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 138.
 55. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
 56. Raj Pal Singh, *Banda Bahadur And His Times*, p. 17.
 57. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
 58. Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, pp. 350-51.
 59. *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 102. Also see Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
 60. Narang, G.C., *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 106.
 61. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
 62. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
 63. Mirza Muhammad Harisi, *Ibrat Namah*, p. 40. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 41.
 64. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
 65. Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
 66. Macauliffe, V., pp. 247-48. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 274.
 67. Gopal Singh, *A History of the Sikh People*, p. 339.
 68. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, p. 11, 653, Elliot, *History of India*, Vol. VII, p. 414. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
 69. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 83. Wazir Khan's force, combined with those of his collaborators from Hissar and its neighbourhood and of Lahore, Eminabad, etc. could not have been less than 20,000.

70. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
71. *Ibid.*
72. He joined Banda Singh Bahadur after abandoning the service of the Nawab of Sarhind (Wazir Khan).
73. Sohan Singh records this date as 30th May 1710 A.D. Dr. Raj Pal Singh, Dr. Gopal Singh, Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, Dr. G.S. Chhabra, record the date as May 12, 1710, A.D. Dr. Ganda Singh and Dr. Gokul Chand Narang records May 30th, 1710, A.D. Dr. G.S. Deol has not recorded any date. But none of the above historians, cited their source. To the author of the present work, May 12, 1710, A.D. appealed the most.
74. According to *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 110, Sham Singh also accompanied Baj Singh. Also compare *Panth Prakash*, p. 306 and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, p. 8.
75. See Dr. Ganda Singh, p. 54.
76. William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 95-96.
77. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings And Authors*, Vol. V, p. 248.
78. Santokh Singh, *Suraj Prakash*, p. 62.
79. Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur* (1907), p. 72.
80. Sohan Singh, *Banda the Brave*, pp. 84-85.
81. Khafi Khan, II, p. 653, Elliot, VII, 414. Irvine I, p. 96.
82. Ganda Singh, *Makhiz-e-Twarikh-e-Sikhan*, I, p. 85.
83. *History of the Punjab, op. cit.*, p. 274.
84. Kanhiyalal, *Tarikh-e-Panjab*, p. 59, as quoted by H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
85. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
86. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
87. Yar Muhammad, *Dastur-ul-Insha*, quoted by Karam Singh, p. 46.
88. See, Gupta, H.R., *op. cit.*, p. 14.
89. Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
90. Muhammad Qasim, *Ibrat Namah*, pp. 20-21. Quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

These punishments were not inflicted upon them because of their being the followers of the Prophet Muhammad Sahib but because of their political persecution of the innocent and religious intolerance towards their poor and helpless subjects. Even the Hindus who were guilty of these offences were not spared.

91. A Shahid Ganj now stands on the site where they were cremated.

92. *Ibrat Namah*, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
93. See Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
Also see S.S. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 8. He writes: It is wrong to say that the Sikhs took Sucha Nand and "made him walk with a thread in his nose through the *bazaars* of Sarhind, after which he met his miserable, disgraceful and ignominious death." According to *Akhbarat* he had escaped prior to the fall of Sarhind to Lahore and was very much alive and present in the court of Emperor on March 20, 1711, A.D.
94. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
95. Gandhi, S.S., *op. cit.*, p. 7.
96. *Akhbarat*, dated May 14, 1710, Quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-24.
97. Yar Muhammad, *Dastur-ul-Insha*, p. 159, quoted by Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
98. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta noted the figure 52 lakhs, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
99. *Ibrat Namah*, p. 21. Ganesh Dass, *Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab*, 189, G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 107. Quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh, p. 61.
100. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 141.
101. *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 114.
102. *Ibid.*
103. Inayat Ali Khan, *Description of the Principal Kotla Afghans*, p. 14, quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
104. *Ibid.*
105. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
106. Inayat Ali Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
The account of the plunder of Maler Kotla in the *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 115-16, VII, XI, is not supported by any historical evidence. There is not even a passing reference to it in Inayat Ali Khan's *Description of the Principal Kotla Afghans*. The exhumation and cremation of the body of Bibi Anup Kaur have either been misunderstood or misrepresented by the imperial news writers and others and have laid the foundation for the erroneous statements of Khafi Khan and Sayyed Muhammad Latif. See *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, p. 11, 654. Elliot, *op. cit.*, VII, 415, Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, pp. 274-75.
107. Sohan Singh puts this figure at 5000, whereas Khazan Singh puts it at 10,000.

Establishment of Sikh State

Banda Singh was the first Sikh leader who laid the foundation of political sovereignty of the Sikhs. He made Sikhism popular with the people of Punjab, not by force or persuasion, but by his bravery and generosity. In about a year, more than one lakh persons embraced Sikhism and became the *Khalsa* of Guru Gobind Singh, says Dr. Hari Ram Gupta.¹ Those who had not heard the names of the Gurus, were attracted towards Sikhism by Banda Singh's victories. Banda Singh had shown what self-government meant. Even afterwards, the lesson was not lost on the Sikhs. He had brought about a revolution in the minds of the people. A will was created in the masses. Heads could be cut off, but the ideas remained, leading ultimately to success.

Banda Singh aimed at national awakening and liberation of the country from the oppressive government of the Mughals. Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh had transformed the Sikhs from a peaceful people into a class of warriors. They never took any offensive and fought only defensive battles against the government. They did not acquire territory, did not take prisoners, and did not seize enemy's property and wealth and obeyed the government. But the seeds of sovereignty were sown and they germinated during the time of Banda Singh Bahadur. According to Banda Singh, the spirit of mercy, compassion, sympathy, tenderness, forbearance and their forgiving mood inculcated among the Indians by religion, had been responsible for

the slavery of the Hindus by people from the north-west. Banda Singh showed them that the only way to meet the foe was to adopt the policy of paying them in their own coin, a tooth for a tooth, and an eye for an eye, and to settle old scores. The Sikhs learnt this lesson from Banda Singh and admirably succeeded in establishing their own rule in their homeland.² Banda Singh always took the offensive, he fought battles, took prisoners, seized the enemy's property and lands, and set up an alternative government. He issued his own coins, had his own official seals and gave orders which had the power of *firman*s of the Mughal Emperor. Like the year of accession of the Mughals, Banda Singh also introduced his own *sammat* or the year commencing with his victory at Sarhind. All this was obviously an open demonstration of equality with the Mughals, guided by the explicit object of infusing in the minds of the Sikhs a spirit of equality with the rulers and to impress upon them that they were in no way inferior to them. Banda Singh did not want merely to weaken the Mughal power, but to destroy it root and branch, and to establish in its place national rule or self-government.

After the conquest of Sarhind and the surrounding territories, the problem before Banda Singh was the choice of a place for his headquarter (not the capital of the state) which should be strong, protective, invincible and away from the enemies. The choice fell on the fort of Mukhlisipur. Banda Singh fixed the fort as a base depot for his future military operations. Mukhlisipur had been occupied by him with the conquest of Sadhaura. The fort of Mukhlisipur was built by one Mukhlis Khan under instructions from Emperor Shah Jahan who occasionally spent his summers there.³ The fort was in a most neglected condition when Banda Singh occupied it. It was soon repaired and was given the new name of Lohgarh, or Iron Fort. All the treasures of Sarhind, the booty of various expeditions, and the tribute and revenue from the conquered territories were brought here. The Sikhs from all over the country, trans and cis-Sutlej, now flocked to his standard in much larger numbers and swelled the ranks of his volunteer-soldiers, some dedicated to the noble cause of the holy war, while others attracted by the prospect of wealth and position under the rapidly rising power of their co-religionists.⁴ The choice of Lohgarh was ideal because the place was situated on the top of a hill among the steeps of the lower Himalayas, approachable only through craggy rocks and rivulets. He had friendly relations with the ruler of Nahan. Nahan was in the rear of Mukhlisipur. Thus, the place chosen by Banda Singh Bahadur for his headquarter was ideal from the strategic point of view also. The location of the fort seems to have been determined not only by the strength of the

place, of which there is no doubt, but also by his desire to consolidate the conquests made hitherto.⁵ It was also taken as a firm base for future expeditions. As such, the war materials also got stored here. According to Khazan Singh, Banda Singh fortified and provided it (Lohgarh) with immense stores of war.⁶

Surinder Singh in his paper published in *Oriental Numismatic Studies* entitled "Initial Sikh Coinage", says that Sarhind, the largest town, was considered too accursed by Sikhs and was treated only as a base depot for its supplies. Dr. Ganda Singh, on the other hand, says that originally Banda Singh's choice of a capital fell upon the town of Sarhind and, apparently, it was with this object in view that he had spared it from complete destruction. But being situated in the plains and on the Grand Trunk Road, it was not considered safe from the attacks of the imperial forces who might at any time attempt to regain their lost power.⁷ Sadhaura fort was strengthened with an extra wall and a moat, and the Lohgarh fortress (the entire area covered with water streams and forests) was also strengthened. Lohgarh is located at a straight mountain cliff about 700 ft above the ground on the border of a thick, extensive jungle area (which even after three centuries is a reserved forest with virtually no habitation). Banda Singh Bahadur successfully used Lohgarh as a tactical retreat or rearguard action stage, when his forces could not withhold the onslaught of Mughal armies at Sadhaura. When the combined Mughal forces, along with Rajputs and Jats, heavily outnumbered his forces and further fighting was suicidal, he would suddenly withdraw his forces to Lohgarh and after a day's rearguard action to stall the enemy forces, would escape into the forests beyond Lohgarh along with his forces. This tactics was successfully utilised in both the battles of Lohgarh in 1710 A.D. and 1713 A.D. The ground conditions of Lohgarh clearly establish the above position. The last few kilometres do not have even a cart road to the fortress and the surrounding area is totally unsuited for habitation. There are remains of fortifications for rearguard action all round the fortress to stall advance by enemy suicide squads.⁸

Eminent historians of Punjab, Dr. Ganda Singh, Dr. G.S. Deol, Dr. Rajpal Singh, Karam Singh, Sohan Singh, Hari Ram Gupta, Dr. Gopal Singh and Gurbux Singh have stated that Banda Singh Bahadur established his capital at Lohgarh, which does not seem to be based on any concrete evidence says Dr. Surinder Singh, but merely on historical hearsay, as the small fortress covering a few acres could not accommodate a state capital, however small the state might be. The basic

needs of a capital—its central location, easy accessibility and sufficient area for habitation, etc.—are totally wanting at Lohgarh site, and the examination of the area clearly establishes that the capital of the Sikh state could not have been Lohgarh. In fact, one is inclined to believe that the Sikhs never got sufficient time to set up a state capital and all their time was spent in the attempt to retain their acquired territories.

Historians and biographers of Banda Singh Bahadur have called him the successor of Guru Gobind Singh, *Sacha Padshah*, etc., some others have called him false Guru.⁹ But most of them state that he took on regal authority. Khushwant Singh calls him an Emperor,¹⁰ Ganda Singh calls him a king except in name,¹¹ based on the prevailing medieval concept of kingship and the absolute hold of the ruler over his subjects. This has not been true of the Sikh organisation. The spirit of democracy led deep into the very foundations of the Sikh society by their Gurus and the spirit of collective leadership bequeathed to the *Khalsa* by the tenth Guru was too strong amongst the Sikhs that any single person could not think of abrogating it to himself, much less of assuming it. This was equally true even after half a century when the Sikhs occupied Lahore in 1765 under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who had successfully led the Sikh forces for over a quarter century. Banda Singh Bahadur was the first amongst equals but was certainly not the absolute ruler or leader in contemporary sense. He had not only been giving due consideration to the opinion of senior Sikhs who came from Nanded, he also gave them all the senior commands and governorship of territories. There are instances of the *Khalsa* over-ruling Banda Bahadur and his acceptance of their verdict. For example, when the question arose about the introduction of a new war-cry *Fateh Darshan*, and that as it came to be used for and to replace the old Sikh salutation—*Wahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Wahiguru ji ki Fateh*—it was rejected by the *Khalsa* and Banda Singh Bahadur bowed his head before the collective decision of the *Khalsa*. This is further established by the fact that all the symbols of sovereignty were in the name of the state and Sikh Gurus, and no epithet, however minor, was adopted for himself by Banda Singh Bahadur. He always preferred to be called *Banda* or servant of the Guru, by the *Khalsa*.¹²

Contemporary historians and news-writers have mentioned the striking of Sikh coins with the establishment of the first Sikh state after the fall of Sarhind in 1710 A.D. to the Sikh forces under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, the commander of the *Khalsa* army, so chosen by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, shortly before his demise at Nanded (Deccan) in 1708 A.D. For a long time these historical accounts

either remained unnoticed or were not given credibility by historians or numismatists, presumably on account of non-availability of any such coins. But from 1967¹³ onwards a couple of such coins have been found and it appears logical that initial Sikh coinage was struck during 1710-12 A.D., with the formation of the Sikh state over the province of Sarhind and surrounding territories under Sikh occupation. The first account of Sikh coins occurs in the news-writers' account of January 1710 A.D. in '*Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*'¹⁴ William Irvine in *The Later Mughals*, has given an account of the Sikhs. He states: "At Lohgarh, Banda Bahadur tried to assume something of a regal state. He was *Sacha Padshah*, the veritable sovereign . . . a coin was struck in the new sovereign's name." William Irvine is wrong here, as the coin had been obviously struck in the name of the Gurus and not Banda Singh Bahadur, which is clear from the legend it bore as under:

Obverse : Sikhah Zad bar har do alam, Tegh Nanak Wahib ast, Fateh Gobind Shah-i-Shahan, fazal Sachcha Sahib ast.

Reverse : Zarb aman-al-dahar, masavarat Shahr Zinat altakht mubarak bakut.

Meaning: "Fateh Gobind, king of kings, struck coins in the two worlds, the sword of Nanak is the granter of desires, by grace of God he is the veritable Lord. Coined at refuge of the world the walled city, ornament of the fortunate throne."¹⁵

There are, however, no footnotes, etc. giving the primary or contemporary accounts from which William Irvine took the above legends. Otherwise, William Irvine is known for his giving copious references from manuscripts, etc., of which he had a very large collection, for the authenticity of the factual portion of his accounts. William Irvine, however, appears to have taken the material on coins from an "anonymous fragment of a manuscript folio no. 141 (his own collection)". This was a part of the Mohammad Ihsan Ijad's¹⁶ manuscript of which another fragment is in the British Museum library.¹⁷

Karam Singh was a very conscientious scholar well-conversant with Persian language. He wrote his first book on Banda Singh Bahadur in 1907 A.D.,¹⁸ in which there is no mention of coins having been struck by the Sikhs, nor is there any reference to Farrukh Siyar Nama by Ihsan Ijad in the bibliographical notes. In his second book *Banda Kaun Si*, he has

mentioned in detail about *Shahnama* by Ihsan Ijad and the special features of his work in his bibliographical notes.¹⁹ Based on Ijad's authority he had recorded the striking of coins by Banda Singh Bahadur and the obverse legend thereon.²⁰ Karam Singh has also given a second reference *Hadiqat-ul-Aqalim* for these Sikh coins.²¹ This part of Karam Singh's statement is incorrect as the legend mentioned therein is a different one. The legend mentioned by Karam Singh is exactly the same as given by William Irvine and so it established the impression that both these scholars took the above legends from the account of Ihsan Ijad. The legend mentioned by Ganda Singh is also the same as that of William Irvine except that he has inserted the word *Singh* after Gobind.²² Ganda Singh has made a slightly different rendering of the Persian legend in English. In fact, he has changed his rendering in his next writing on Banda Bahadur. However, the Roman English rendering of the legend is exactly the same as by William Irvine and some minor mistakes committed by him, are repeated by Ganda Singh, viz., the word "al" between "aman" and "dahar" and before "takht" has been written as "ud". Ganda Singh has profusely quoted Persian extracts and references but has not given any source reference on the coin and its legends. It is quite likely that Ganda Singh took the legends from William Irvine and Karam Singh. Hari Ram Gupta, in his *History of Sikhs*, has simply stated that Banda Singh Bahadur struck coins and issued orders under his own seal,²³ without giving any source reference for the same, although he has otherwise been as meticulous as William Irvine in giving references and footnotes. G.S. Deol, has mentioned about the coin and its legend acknowledging the same having been taken from Ganda Singh's account.²⁴ Giani Gian Singh in his book *Guru Khalsa* has given a fairly detailed account of Banda Singh Bahadur, but there is no mention about the coin or its legends.²⁵ Khushwant Singh in his book recorded he had also "new coins struck to mark his reign bearing the names of Guru Nanak and Gobind".²⁶ The legends mentioned in footnotes are those mentioned by Ganda Singh without giving his source reference or acknowledging Ganda Singh's account. Dr. Grewal adds further confusion on the Sikh coinage²⁷ when he writes that he struck a new coin in the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. With a similar inscription he started using a seal on his orders (*Hukamnamas*). He has not given any contemporary historical evidence in support of his assertion that it was the same as on the seal and not in any way different.

So from the above discussion, the picture that emerges is that the legend on the coins struck by Banda Singh Bahadur was apparently recorded by Ihsan Ijad in his manuscript which appeared to have been scrutinized by William Irvine and Karam Singh. Karam Singh carried out most of his research in Lahore libraries and hence Ijad's manuscript is likely to be available in some library in Lahore. The manuscript examined by William Irvine was his own copy and to which library it had been donated required a search in British libraries. Ganda Singh seems to have taken the account of legends from William Irvine's and Karam Singh's works. All the other modern historians took the legend from Ganda Singh. All this examination of the initial Sikh coinage has been carried out by historians without any examination of actual coins and hence has been based on hearsay and imagination, as no author seems to have actually examined the coins and thereafter recorded about them.

Col. Charles Panish came across a silver rupee coin which was fairly true to the coin legends mentioned by William Irvine. Although there were certain minor variations, Panish was inclined to consider it to be the legendary issue of Banda Singh Bahadur. He brought the same to the notice of the numismatic world through an article thereon in 1967.²⁸ Over a decade later, John Deyell²⁹ came across a somewhat similar coin and wrote an elaborate article on various aspects of his and Panish's coin in 1980.³⁰ John Deyell's coin is an earlier issue than that of Panish as it carries the numerical 2 and the other coin carries the numerical 3. But his coin is not the first issue of Banda Bahadur. The prevailing practice on contemporary coinage had been to use the word *Ahad* on first issues instead of numeral 1, and there was evidence that the Sikhs were using this word *Ahad* on their state correspondence of the first year of their new (Sammatt era).³¹ The first coin is as yet to be located along with the account of Ihsan Ijad for its examination and comparison with the historical account.

John Deyell has stated that Ganda Singh's addition of the word *Singh* with Gobind on the obverse legend has hopelessly muddled the rhythm. Ganda Singh has the flair of adding *Singh* to the names of historic Sikh personalities as the same is deemed to be an inherent part of the name and not a surname or sub-caste. One is inclined to agree that Ganda Singh may have added the word *Singh* with Gobind without having it on any historical evidence, but the second coin has the word *Singh* added to "Gobind", thus establishing that the Sikhs themselves made the said

change in 1712 A.D. assuming that the simple word "Gobind" as such was not in full reverence to their Guru who had made *Singh* an essential part of the Sikh names. The question as to why and how Ganda Singh added the word *Singh* becomes irrelevant due to the actual appearance on the third year's coin.

Initial Sikh Coinage

Second Year's Coin



OBVERSE: SIKKAH ZAD BAR HAR DO ALAM TEGH-NANAK
WAHIB AST
FATEH GOBIND SHAH-SHAHAN FAZAL SACHCHA
SAHIB AST

REVERSE: ZARB BA AMAN-UD-DAHAR MASWARAT SHAHR
ZINAT-UT-TAKHT KHALSA MUBARAK BAKHT

Third Year's Coin



THE WORD GOBIND IS WRITTEN AS GOBIND SINGH ON THE
OBVERSE.

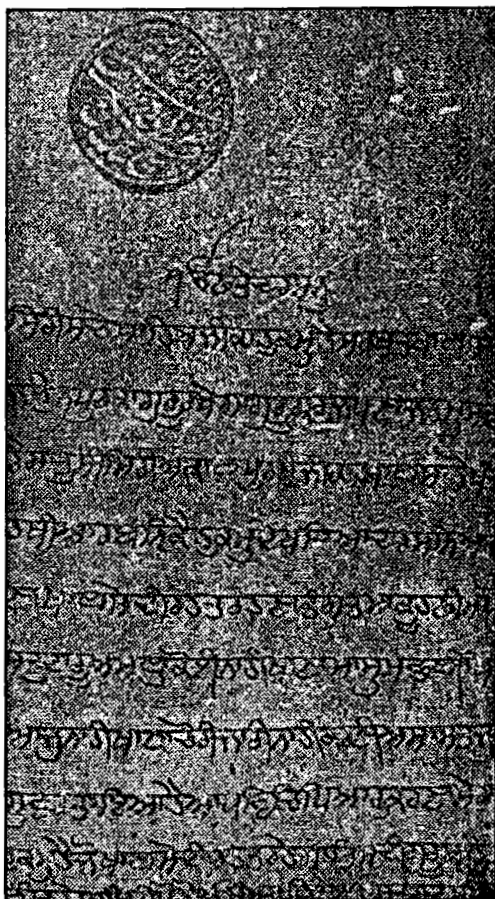
THE WORD AMAN-UD-DAHAR IS WRITTEN AS AMAN-UD-DIN
ON THE REVERSE.

The meaning of the legends, keeping in view the Sikh ethos, should be as under.³²

Obverse: The coin has been struck in both the worlds herein and hereafter. With the guarantee of Guru Nanak's sword or granted by Guru Nanak under the strength of his sword. The victory of Guru Gobind Singh, King of Kings, has been achieved with the grace of Sacha Sahib, the God Almighty. Sikhs have always believed in God Almighty and taken their ten Gurus as one identity and all their saviours God, Nanak to Gobind Singh stand encompassed in the couplet.

Reverse: "Coined at the place of peace and security, picture of a beautiful city, where the auspicious throne of *Khalsa* is located."³³ The word *Khalsa* appears on both the coins and whether the same was also printed on the first coin or was an innovation of the second year can only be ascertained after the first year's coin is located.

John Deyell is right to assert with logical arguments that the Sikh coins need not have been minted at Lohgarh, but from the place where it was convenient or where the main strength of the *Khalsa* army was located. He further stated that from the elegance of his coin pertaining to the second year, it could be assumed that it was minted in more secure and peaceful circumstances than the second coin pertaining to the third year which is rather crude and dumpy. There is a change on the reverse legend of the second coin and the words *aman-al-dahar* have been changed into *aman-al-din* i.e., from the security of the place, it has been called under protection of the faith, which also, in a way, gives an indication to the disturbed conditions at the time of minting. This view gets further support from the fact that when the Sikhs had developed their firm hold on territories after 1765, they started giving the names of mint towns on the reverse of the coins. The author shares the views of John Deyell that Sikh coins may not have been minted from Lohgarh. The changes on the coins give indication of the change in political situation faced by the newly arisen and growing nation. The study of initial Sikh coinage, however, remains incomplete till the first year's coin and Ijad's account mentioning the said coins or any other contemporary historical reference are traced and examined by scholars and numismatists with the three features not known, i.e., the name of the ruler, place of the mint, and the year of minting. The cloud of some



The *Hukam Namah* or Letter of Banda Singh Bahadur, dated 12th Poh, Sammat 1, about December 26th, 1710, addressed to the *Sarbat Khalsa* of Jaunpur.

uncertainty will hang over these coins, whether their having been struck during Banda Singh Bahadur's time or in the period of some later Sikh leaders.

The first Sikh state under Banda Singh Bahadur also had a royal stamp inscribed for use. It was used on Banda Singh's *hukamnamahs* and *farmans* or orders and letters patent.³⁴ This was a little smaller in size than a paisa, a copper coin of the British time, before 1947 and was used for making impressions on the orders of his government.³⁵ The first account of Sikh seal occurs in the news-writer's account of January 1710 A.D. in "*Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*."³⁶ In addition, it is learnt from a letter³⁷ of Hidayat Kesh, the chief news-writer, that Banda Bahadur's seal contained the following verse:

ਬਾਬਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਭਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ
 ਵਾਸੀ ਰੂਪੇ ਕੇ ਜੋਗੁ
 ਸਰਬਤ੍ਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀਉ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ---ਗੁਕਮ
 ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਈ ਪੰਜੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬੱਧਿ ਆਵਣਾ---



ੴ ਫਤੇ ਦਰਸਨ ਸਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ
 ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ॥ ਭਾਈ ਪਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ
 ਦਾਨ ਸਿੰਘ॥ ਸੰਗੋ ਸਿੰਘ॥ ਵਾਸੀ ਰੂਪੇ ਕੇ॥
 ਬਤਰਿ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਜੀਉ ਦਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ
 ਰਖੇਗਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਉਰੇਗਾ॥
 ਗੁਕਮ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਈ ਪੰਜੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਬਧਿ ਆਵਣਾ॥
 ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਆਵੇਗਾ ਸੋ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ॥
 ਸੰਗਤ ਦੇ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਪੂਰੇ ਹੋਵੇਗੇ।
 ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੋਏ

Azmat-i-Nanak Guru ham Zahar-O-batan ast
Padshah-i-din-O duniya aap Sachcha Sahib ast.

The English translation of the verse is: "Inwardly and outwardly the greatness of Guru Nanak was established. The true Guru was the king of religion and the world."³⁸ It is further corroborated by the recording of the same couplet by another contemporary historian in *Hadiquat-i-aqalim*.³⁹ The use of this legend on the state seal is not authenticated by the availability of its imprint on any state document. The seal impressions that have been located are of:

"Deg Tegh Fateh Nusrat Baidarang,
Yaft Uz Nanak Guru Gobind Singh"

Meaning, the kettle to feed the poor, sword to defend and protect the meek and helpless, and spontaneous victory (fateh and nusrat have the same meaning) received from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. This legend appears as a seal imprint on *hukamnamahs* issued by Banda Singh Bahadur, such as one dated December 26, 1710, A.D. to the *Sangat* at Jaunpur, and another (undated) to Bhai Dharam Singh.⁴⁰ Half a century later, this legend has been profusely used by Sikhs on their coins struck regularly from Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Kashmir, etc.⁴¹

Besides firmly establishing the position that Sikh coinage was started by Banda Singh Bahadur in 1710 A.D. as derived from the historical accounts and numismatic investigations of the coins so far located, it throws light on a very important feature of the Sikh concept of sovereignty, shortly after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, and with the institution of the first Sikh state. The two legends, both on the coin and the seal, give a true depiction of the concept of temporal sovereignty as bequeathed by the tenth Guru to the *Khalsa Panth*. The growth of the community in *misls*, and then a strong monarchy, over a period of a century and a half, did in some way dilute the initial concept, but the symbol of sovereignty of the *Khalsa* so chosen remained the same till the very last days of the Sikh state. It is amazing that Banda Singh Bahadur, belonging to a different religious creed, became disciple of Guru Gobind Singh and, within a short period of a few months or even less, was selected the commander of the *Khalsa* army and sent to Punjab where all his energies and time was spent in creating and defending the infant Sikh state. Yet, in this short time he could understand and express the Sikh concept of sovereignty in such simple, lucid, and meaningful, words that, leave alone any change, no Sikh authority has ever suggested

any alteration or improvement therein. He certainly had a spectacular insight in the Sikh ethos and traditions, besides his being an extraordinary commander of forces in whose psyche the fear of death was totally nonexistent.

Banda Singh put on the coins the most appropriate and elegant descriptive definition of the concept of Sikh sovereignty as bequeathed to the *Khalsa Panth* by its Gurus that it remained universally acceptable during the entire duration of the Sikh state, i.e., from 1710 A.D. to 1850 A.D. If at all in the near or distant future the Sikhs regain their sovereignty, says Surinder Singh, the legends inscribed by Banda Bahadur are likely to decorate the future Sikh currency as the true exposition of the Sikh sovereignty.

Ganda Singh holds that Banda Singh Bahadur introduced his own *Sammats*⁴² or year commencing with his victory at Sarhind, as did the Mughal rulers with their years of accession. This was done by him to create in the minds of the Sikhs a spirit of equality with the rulers and to impress upon them that they were in no way inferior.⁴³ Banda Singh's swift success did not make him blind to the reality that the Mughal Emperor was bound to do all within his power to retrieve his lost territories and prestige. As a realist in politics, Banda Singh Bahadur took steps to evolve an alternative state. Since Guru Gobind Singh "had enjoined upon Banda Singh to serve the *Panth* and had appointed him commander of the *Khalsa*, he knew that it was not he but the collective Sikh community that was blessed with the sovereignty by the *Sacha Padshah* (Guru Gobind Singh)".⁴⁴ Therefore, it is wrong to suggest that Banda Singh had set up a monarchy and styled himself as *Padshah*.⁴⁵ It is true that he issued his orders, coins and seals, but all this cannot be taken to mean that Banda Singh became a *Padshah*. Banda Singh was not an anarchist. He aimed at not only the destruction of the Mughal government in Punjab but also the establishment of a Sikh state. S.S. Bal writes: "Normally the result of the brilliant campaign of Banda Singh would have been the establishment of a monarchy with coins and seals engraved with his name, but that did not happen."⁴⁶ Emphasizing the distinction between the state established by Banda Singh Bahadur and the Mughal state of India, Ganda Singh has beautifully summed up: "The Mughal Emperors struck coins and engraved seals in their own names. Banda Singh . . . on the other hand, struck his coins and engraved his seals in the name of Guru Nanak and Gobind Singh. . . . His orders and appeals to the Sikh Sangats were issued in the name of the Guru (Guru Gobind Singh)".⁴⁷ The word *Sri Sacha Sahib* he used for the Guru

not for himself. It was in the name of the Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) that he issued orders and appealed to the *Khalsa* to join him. The use of such words as "Nanak", "Gobind Singh", "Deg" and "Teg" explain that whatever he did was strictly in the name of the *Khalsa* and the authority which he assumed was on behalf of and in the name of the *Khalsa*.

Very little is known about the constitution and administrative system of the government set up by Banda Singh Bahadur and his deputies. Perhaps he had neither the time nor the requisite experience to do so, and it was all a military activity. Amongst the few administrative measures taken by Banda Singh Bahadur was that he established Sikh *thanas* at various important towns, created subdivisions and placed them under charge of Sikh *Sardars*.

It is also said that Banda Singh Bahadur abolished the much abused *zamindari system*.⁴⁸ The word *zamindar* in Mughal administration was used to denote various types of hereditary interests ranging from powerful, independent and autonomous chiefs to petty intermediaries at the village level. *Zamindari* as a system and institution had so much penetrated the Mughal administration that it could be found in the *Khalsa* as well as in the assigned lands or *jagirs*. Here we are concerned with the type of *zamindars* who collected the revenue from the cultivators or peasantry and paid it to the imperial treasury or to the *jagirdars* or to the *chiefs* or in certain cases, kept it for themselves.⁴⁹ Under strong administrators, these *zamindars* performed their duties according to the imperial regulations and exercised their rights within the specified limits, but under weak administrators they hardly ever hesitated to break the rules. In actual practice they always tried to go beyond the specified limits and to appropriate to themselves a greater share of the revenue than what they were entitled to. The frequent use of the term *zamindaran-i-zor talab* in the contemporary administrative literature indicated that there were quite a large number of *zamindars* who would not pay unless force was applied. These *zamindars* were sandwiched between the *superior zamindars* (chiefs or rulers of Indian states) and the state, on the one hand, and the peasantry on the other. They were constantly struggling to improve their position and thus came frequently into clash with both the sides. They always tried to shift the burden of revenue demands to the cultivators and thus contributed to the intensification of economic exploitation of the peasantry.⁵⁰ The authorities did not interfere in their affairs so long as they paid land revenue regularly. It was perhaps this type of *zamindars* whom Banda Singh Bahadur removed from their positions and appointed his own

men as collectors or *amils*. The Sikh movement signified a protest against the beneficiaries of the existing structure of authority. These beneficiaries may be *zamindars* or *madad-i-ma'ash grantees*,⁵¹ were corrupt and extortionist. The economic condition of the peasants was very miserable because of the highhandedness of these beneficiaries of the state. Not only the *zamindars* and Mughal *amils* (revenue collectors of the Mughals) but the *madad-i-ma'ash* holders were also removed from their lands, by the Sikhs.⁵² These *grantees* were not suppose to pay revenue to the rulers, so they exploited the peasants and collected more from the peasants, than the assessed revenue.⁵³ So Banda Singh Bahadur, for the first time in India's memorable history, abolished the corrupt and extortionist intermediaries called the *zamindars* and the tiller of the soil heaved a big sigh of relief. This is the class which has been the backbone, since then, of all movements of religious and political freedom in Punjab.⁵⁴

The Sikhs being mostly the cultivators themselves, the sufferers under this *zamindari system*, naturally wanted to get rid of it. So Banda Singh took up the question of land reforms and abolished the most hated system. Thus, the right to collect the revenue which had hitherto been under the jurisdiction of intermediaries and Mughal *amils*, were given to the lowly placed and non-descript communities who joined Banda Singh Bahadur. "The scavengers, the leather-dressers and the other low-born had only to leave their homes and join the Sikh leader when in a short time they would return to their birthplace as its rulers." This rulership implied primarily the right to collect the revenue says, Dr. Muzaffar Alam.⁵⁵ Even before the conquest of Sarhind, Banda Singh dislodged the old and corrupt intermediaries and appointed his own men for the collection of revenue and issued orders to Mughal officials and *jagirdars* to submit and give up their claims to their territories (right to collect revenue). In 1710 A.D. when the Sikhs entered Rahon, they issued threatening orders to the *chaudhries*, *muqaddams* and *qanungos* of Rahon and the adjacent *parganas* calling upon them to surrender.⁵⁶ To consolidate the gains of their victory, the Sikh appointees followed *batai system*.⁵⁷ They gave two parts of the produce to the peasants and one part was retained by them.⁵⁸ On these conditions the peasants agreed to work on the land,⁵⁹ and happily extended their helping hand to Banda Singh Bahadur. So, on the economic plane, Banda Singh Bahadur could be given the credit for introducing revenue reforms in the Punjab. This was a remarkable contribution of Banda Singh Bahadur, which was later improved upon by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The victory of Sarhind had been achieved as a result of the tide of

religious zeal of his followers and political ambition of Banda Singh Bahadur. In order to resist future invasions by the Mughals, Banda Singh Bahadur could not solely rely on the meagre resources at his disposal. The only hope of survival lay in broadbasing the movement. Banda Singh could expect support generally from two sections of society, one consisted of the people who were opposed to Muslim bigotry, and the second were the peasants who were driven to despair by the extortions of revenue officials. Banda Singh Bahadur decided to espouse the cause of both these groups—Hindus and Muslims alike—and welcomed them in his ranks. Thus the struggle was essentially not a war of revenge as suggested by Gianeshwar Khurana, but was certainly a struggle for socio-religious liberty and economic equity. The result of this farsighted policy of Banda Singh Bahadur was amazing. His revolt did not remain a localised issue but became a widespread affair, growing into a mass movement. People all over the hills and the plains rose against the tyrants. The Hindus and the Muslims alike joined Banda Singh Bahadur to expel the Mughals from their regions. Banda Singh's realistic politics made it considerably difficult for the Mughal officials either to curtail or curb the rebellion easily. In addition to appointing Sikhs to important posts, Banda Singh Bahadur appointed Jan Muhammad, the *Zamindar* of the whole *pargana* of Buria (renamed by Banda Singh Bahadur after occupation as Gulabnagar), and his lapses were forgiven. He was ordered to go along with his contingent to bring Sardar Khan, the *Zamindar* of Chondla. According to Bhagwati Das Harkara's report submitted to the Emperor on April 28, 1711, Banda Singh Bahadur had given a word and expressed his resolve not to harass the Muslims. Therefore, all those Muslims who joined him were given daily allowance and wages and were properly looked after. He had permitted them to read *Khutba* and offer prayers. Thus, 5000 Muslims (living around Kalanaur) joined the service of the rebel Sikh leader, with freedom of *ajan* (call for prayer) and the *namaz* (daily prayer). These Muslims felt comfortable in the army of the rebels (Sikhs).⁶⁰ Banda Singh's movement "was a movement of the depressed classes" and as the time passed, men from all walks of life, all castes, creeds and religion flocked to his banner.

With the establishment of the Sikh rule by Banda Singh Bahadur, the prestige of the Sikhs rose and their very name and sight became a terror to others. In this connection, Ganda Singh remarks: "The terror of the very name of the Sikhs was to completely establish that even the sight of a single Sikh horseman would unnerve a multitude of the erstwhile unbending officials and their followers. Every Sikh, whatever, station in

life, felt to have been providentially raised above every one of his fellow-subjects and destined to be a ruler."⁶¹

The power and prestige of Banda Singh Bahadur increased immensely. He commanded a large army and was looked upon by the Hindus as the champion of Hinduism. "Oppressed Hindus resorted to him for help which was willingly and efficiently given, a fact which had a great influence in promoting the growth of the Sikh power. The slayers of the kins were given no quarter and this alone was sufficient to win over the sympathies of the whole Hindu race."⁶² Such was the awe he inspired throughout the occupied territory that, according to William Irvine, "it led to a complete and striking reversal of the previous customs in the caste-ridden land". "A low scavenger or a leather-dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru (i.e., Banda Singh Bahadur) when in a short time he would return to his birth place as its ruler with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders. . . . Not a soul dared to disobey an order and men who had often risked themselves in battlefield, became so cowed down that they were afraid even to remonstrate. Hindus who had not joined the sect were not exempt from these."⁶³

In fact, during the short period of the Sikh rule under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, "the state was administrated as per the concept of the double sovereignty. Whatever the Sikhs demanded for themselves, they conceded to all people including the Muslims. It is in this perspective that Muslims were not maltreated at all, rather they were allowed to enjoy their rights and privileges as a distinctive culture-group, provided they shed off their concept of theo-monastic-state."⁶⁴ Thus, Banda Singh built the structure of a secular state and government in the community and defended and headed it like a potentate, who combined the spirit, the work and the mission of a nation-builder with the self-denial of a saintly personage. His talent for fighting skilfully, tenaciously and, even brilliantly, to a victorious consummation, had won him a name among the Sikhs and had made him a nightmare for their enemies. Banda Singh Bahadur, thus, laid truly the foundation of a Sikh state in the country, upon which was confidently raised a superstructure later by his community, which culminated in the rule of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, the lion of Punjab. Banda Singh's life as the captain of the

Sikh nation's ship, though short-lived, was beyond a doubt as distinctive as it was distinguished.

The Sikh rule headed by Banda Singh Bahadur heralded a new era—the era of the peasant, free from *zamindars*, egalitarianism and individual liberty—in the history of the Punjab in which Banda Singh Bahadur evolved the concept of participative leadership. Consequently, Banda Singh Bahadur was able to lead into the field “an army of innumerable men, like ants and locusts, belonging to the low castes of the Hindus and ready to die at his orders.”⁶⁵ These adherents of Banda Singh Bahadur do not by any means exhaust the list of his followers who participated in his task of the liberation of their motherland and breaking of age-old shackles of economic and social inequities.

With the establishment of the *Khalsa Raj*, however small in its extent, there was a tremendous change in the outlook of the Sikhs. They looked upon themselves, just as they were looked up to by the non-Muslim population, as “defenders of the faith and country”. Every complaint from the oppressed people, therefore, excited them against the local officials and aristocrats. They considered it their religious duty to help their suffering brethren, and as this could only be accomplished by the removal of Mughal deputies, the Sikhs all over voluntarily embarked on a career of conquest, and set themselves the task of effecting their plans, of course, in their own way. There was at this time a general Sikh rising in the country. Their conquests were not confined to southern districts of Punjab only, but were carried on in the north with almost the same and perhaps greater zeal and vigour.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Gupta, Hari Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
3. It was a strong hill fort about half way between the towns of Sadhaura and Nahan (about nine *kos* from Sadhaura according to Ganda Singh. Khazan Singh says that it was 26 miles from Sadhaura), within the boundary of the village of Amuwal, among the steepes of the Himalayas on an elevated summit, which could be approached only through craggy rocks and ravines. It was surrounded by two rivulets, Pamuwali and Daskawali Khols, or Khuds, which originally formed only one stream, parting into two to embrace the hillock of the fort.
4. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
5. See *Punjab Past and Present*, October, 1917, p. 884.

6. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion*, Part I, p. 210.
7. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
8. Surinder Singh, *Initial Sikh Coinage*, p. 183 in *oriental numismatic studies* by D. Handa.
9. 'Banda Singh always declared himself to be *Banda* or servant of the Guru, but some of his followers from amongst the *Khalsa* took him to be the Guru and followed him as such, says the author of the *Risalah-i-Sahib-Numa*. There is nothing on record to show that he ever mentioned or described himself as a Guru. In his letters addressed to the *Sikh Sangat* (see his letter to the *Sarbat-Khalsa* of Jaunpur dated 12th Poh 25-26th December, 1710 A.D.), he used the words *Sri Sacha Sahib*, not for himself but for the Guru, in whose name he issued orders and appealed to the *Khalsa* to join him. See Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
10. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, pp. 57-58.
11. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
13. Charles Panish, *JNSI*, Vol. XXIX, pt. II, 1967, pp. 88-90. The first coin pertaining to Banda Singh Bahadur's period was located by Charles Panish in 1967. Quoted by Surinder Singh, *Initial Sikh Coinage*, p. 183.
14. See Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 184 in *Oriental Numismatic Studies* by D. Handa.

"The *Khalsa Sikhs* have strange practices amongst themselves. They call one person as an army. In their despatches, they write that an army of Sikhs have arrived. Some say they have struck coins and in their *hukamnamas* the year 'Ahad is written'.
15. William Irvine, *The Later Mughals*, 1989, Delhi, p. 110.
16. Ijad was a court chronicler who wrote *Shahnama* under the orders of Farrukh Siyar in 1131 Hijri, i.e., 1715 A.D. Some of the accounts of Banda Singh Bahadur written by Ijad are not available in any other Persian manuscript.
17. Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
18. Karam Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur* (Punjabi), Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, 1907.
19. Karam Singh, *Banda Kaun Si* (Punjabi) Amritsar, p. 34.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
22. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
23. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
24. G.S. Deol, *Banda Bahadur*, 1972, pp. 57-58.
25. Gian Singh Giani, *Guru Khalsa*, Patiala, 1970.
26. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

27. J.S. Grewal, *The Cambridge History of India*, II. 3. *The Sikhs of Punjab*, Orient Longman, 1990, p. 83.
28. Charles K. Panish, "The First Sikh Trans-Sutlej Coinage", *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. XXIX, 1967, pp. 88-90. Quoted by Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
29. A scholar of numismatic of international repute and an official in Canadian High Commission in India.
30. John S. Deyell, "Banda Singh Bahadur and the first Sikh coinage," *Numismatic Digest*, Vol. IV, Part I, June 1980, Bombay, pp. 59-67. Quoted by S. Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*
31. The first account of Sikh coins occurs in the news writers account of January 1710 A.D. in *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*. "Some say they have struck coins and in their *hukamnamas* the year 'Ahad' is written."
32. Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.
33. According to Dr. Ganda Singh, these were the titles and epithets used by him for Lohgarh, just as each imperial city had its appropriate honorific name.
34. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
35. Sohan Singh Seetal, *Rise of Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 68.
36. See Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 184 in *Oriental Numismatic Studies*, by D. Handa.
... elephants, cash and grain of Wazir Khan of Sarhind has fallen in their hands in large quantities. They have made their own *mohar* seal.
37. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*, 39, p. 40, Translated and edited version available in *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVIII (II) October, 1984, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 30, Hidayat Kesb, the chief news writer, presented the Emperor the following verse of the rebel Guru:
"Azmat-i-Nanak Guru ham Zahar o batan ast
Padshah-i-din-O duniya aap Sachcha Sahib ast."
38. *Ibid.*, Quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
39. Hadiqat-al-Aqalim (M.S.), Muslim University, Aligarh, p. 148.
40. *Hukamnama* dated December 12, 1710, and another addressed to Bhai Dharam Singh (undated) reproduced in *Hukamname* by Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1985 pp. 92-95.
41. Hans Herrli, *Coins of the Sikhs*, Indian Coin Society, Nagpur, 1993, pp. 31-33. Quoted by Surinder Singh, *op. cit.*
42. Like the Sann-i-Jalus or the year of accession, of the Mughal Emperor.
43. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
44. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, 1939, p. 117.
45. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 107, writes about Banda Bahadur as a Padshah or king.

46. S.S. Bal in *the Medieval Indian State*, Chandigarh, 1966, p. 124. Quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
47. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-85.
48. Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73. "In matters of government, he introduced one of the greatest fiscal reforms in the country by abolishing the *zamindari system* of the Mughals which had reduced the cultivators to the position of slaves. With the establishment of Banda Singh's Raj, the actual cultivators of the soil became the proprietors of their holdings and the oppression resulting from the old system was for ever eradicated from the Punjab."
49. Day, U.N., *The Mughal Government*, p. 137.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
51. They were the holders of revenue-free land. These types of grants were given to the saints or scholars to help them. For details see Day, U.N., *op. cit.*, pp. 143-44.
52. Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India—Awadh and the Punjab (1707-1748)*, p. 146.
53. Day, U.N., *op. cit.*, p. 139.
54. Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-43.
55. Muzaffar Alam, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Batai* is a type of assessment in which the state claims from its representative directly a share in the produce of the soil. This was effected in two ways. One method was to send officers to visit the field with standing crop and make an assessment of the approximate produce and then to fix the government's share thereon. The other method was measuring the produce after it had been actually harvested and then demanding the share on the basis of the measure.
58. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*, January 1710 A.D. "... In the villages the produce is divided between them and the tillers of the land, two parts to the tiller and one part to them. The land has been given to the tillers. They (Sikh) want all this be made known to the king. . . ."
59. The number of cultivators available for tilling the soil was much less than the land available for cultivation. The cultivators too were ever willing to leave their land on the slightest difficulty and migrate to new track where there was no dearth of land for them to occupy and cultivate. Since agriculture was not profitable and was carried out with primitive means of cultivation, mobility was easy and hardly caused sufficient loss so as to lure them not to abandon their fields for new ones. Under the circumstances, government's policy was to prevent the cultivator from leaving his field unless he could find a substitute to cultivate his land or could find a buyer who, after purchase, would cultivate it. The basic idea, therefore, seems to have been not to allow agricultural land to get converted into fallow land.

60. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*, January 9, 1711 A.D.
61. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
62. Narang, Gokul Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 103, fn. 3.
63. William Irvine, *Late Mughals*, Vol. I, pp. 98-99.
64. S.S. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 480.
Saiyid Ghulam Ali Khan, *Imadur Saadat*, p. 71. Quoted in *Agrarian System of the Mughal India* by Irfan Habib, p. 345.
65. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 672, Satish Chandra, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

Rising of the Sikhs

YAMUNA-GANGA DOAB REGION

The success of Banda Singh Bahadur, "the temporal leader of the Khalsa" was quite swift and the conflagration had spread simultaneously between the Ganga and the Yamuna, and Majha and Jullundur Doab. So it is not possible to follow a strictly chronological order in the narration of events of this period and they will be dealt with one after another. After establishing themselves firmly at Lohgarh, Banda Singh and the *Khalsa* started invading the Mughal territories in the neighbourhood of Lohgarh. The Mughal officers withdrew in panic. Banda Singh Bahadur put his own armed posts in the villages and towns of the conquered areas which spread "from a few days" march from Delhi to the outskirts of Lahore. In this area, the Sikhs set up their own administration. They appointed their own *thanedars* and *tahsildars* to collect revenue".¹ Consequently, the persons oppressed by the Mughal officers or tyrants from the neighbouring areas started to lodge their complaints before him. Encouraged by this response, Banda Singh Bahadur addressed himself to chastise the cruel Mughal officials of Yamuna-Ganga Doab region and to do justice for the downtrodden and weak. His concept of justice has been aptly summed up in the *Prachin Pothi* in Banda Singh's own words: "The best worship for a king is to be just", is written in the holy *Granth*. "Those who do not administer justice are caste into hell. A king should practise justice. Thus spoke to me the great man (Guru

Gobind Singh). If you call yourself the Sikhs of the great man, do not practise sin, *adharma* and injustice. Rise up true Sikhs and smite those who do un-Sikh like deeds. Bear the sayings of the great man in your hearts."²

The news of Banda Singh Bahadur's victories and progress travelled far and wide. People, out of fear, started embracing Sikhism. According to Sohan Singh Seetal, the author of the *Rise of Sikh Power in the Panjab*, the ascendancy of the *Khalsa* to this power had prompted numerous Hindus, from far and near, to embrace Sikhism. Even some Muslims had preferred to be called Sikhs. Many Hindus had forcibly even atrociously been converted to Islam during the Mughal rule. They had not been reconciled to their new religion. As soon as they felt a little safe from Muslim oppression, they threw Islam overboard and adopted the Sikh creed. Hinduism did not take back any of the converts at any cost, even though they had been forced to leave it at the point of the sword. But the doors of Guru Nanak's creed were always open to welcome anybody. Consequently, these persecuted citizens gladly found refuge under the protection of the liberator of the oppressed that Guru Nanak was, and turned Sikhs. That was why the number of Sikhs had grown rapidly.³

The whole tract of Deoband—a *pargana* of Saharanpur—embraced Sikhism. Many of these converts were from the village of Unarsa. But this conversion became an eyesore to Jalal Khan, the *Faujdar* of that tract. So he ordered all these Sikhs to be imprisoned and persecuted. Kapoor Singh, who had been appointed a Sikh missionary of the *Khalsa* of that area by Banda Singh, wrote to him about the pitiable condition of the Sikhs there and asked for help.⁴ Thus the condition of the non-Muslims in general and Sikhs in particular in Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar districts had indeed been extremely deplorable because of the tyrannical activities of Jalal Khan, the *Hakim* of Jalalabad. According to Gokul Chand Narang, "Banda marched eastward on receiving a complaint from the Hindus of Deoband who were being cruelly treated by Jalal-uddin."⁵ On the receipt of the complaint either by the Hindus or Sikhs or by both, Banda Singh Bahadur decided to extend help to the oppressed. But before displaying the strength of his arms, he sent his emissaries to the said Khan asking him to stop his highhandedness towards them. However, his emissaries were ill-treated.⁶ Thereupon Banda Singh Bahadur was left with no other choice but to lead a punitive expedition to check his atrocities on the innocent, hapless people.

The *Khalsa* army marched upon the town of Saharanpur on their way to Jalalabad as Saharanpur was equally obnoxious to them as one of the principal strongholds of bigoted *Mughal Faujdar*. Ali Hamid Khan,⁷ a Sayyed of Qanauj, was then the *Faujdar* of this place. The Sikhs addressed a letter to him and called upon him to submit, in which case, they said, he would not be molested. Instead of submitting to the *Khalsa* or asserting himself, Ali Hamid Khan Qanauji, the *Faujdar* of Saharanpur, immediately took to flight on hearing about the Sikh march in the Doab. The Sikhs chased him but he safely escaped to Delhi. The Sikhs crossed the Yamuna, captured Sarsawa and then fell on Saharanpur. Soon they overcame the resistance of its inhabitants. In panic many people fled from the town.⁸ A large booty consisting of money, jewels and goods fell into the hands of the Sikhs. In the words of Muhammad Harisi,⁹ "The whole country, far and near, was in panic. Those people who were rich enough or lucky enough to obtain means of conveyance carried off their goods and families. The rest taking their wives and children by hand fled on foot. Women who had rarely been outside the courtyard of their own houses, and had never gone one step outside on foot, were forced to walk distances of thirty and forty miles. In this way, half of the Sarkar of Saharanpur fell into the hands of the Sikhs."

Beyhut, a village of the *Pirzadas*,¹⁰ was situated at a distance of seventeen miles from Saharanpur. They were very notorious for cow slaughter and tyrannising the poor Hindus. They plundered the property of the Hindus and killed cows in the streets and desecrated the Hindu homes of the town disdainfully. The Sikhs swooped upon Beyhut as soon as they came to know of these atrocities. The *Pirzadas* tried to oppose them. But that was of no avail at all. They were all put to the sword, except one of them who happened to have been away to Bulandshahr. He was the only survivor of the clan. After plundering and burning the mansions of the *Pirzada* families, the Sikhs returned to Saharanpur.

On return of this detachment to Saharanpur, the Sikhs prepared to march southwards to Jalalabad, lying about thirty miles south of Saharanpur and about twenty miles west of Deoband. They addressed severe orders to Jalal Khan, the founder and *Faujdar* of that place, to release forthwith the Sikh prisoners of Unarsa and to tender his submission to the Sikh power. Unlike Ali Hamid Khan of Saharanpur, who had fled to Delhi on receipt of the Sikh message, Jalal Khan was a typical Afghan "famed for his boldness and valour throughout the country". Jalal Khan was a Pathan of sterling courage. He had already taken part in many a battle successfully and creditably. He had fought

under the command of Aurangzeb in the Deccan. He had conquered and destroyed the town Khera Manihar of the Rajputs, and had built on its ruins his present town that was called Jalalabad after his own name. He commanded a very powerful army of the Pathans of the Khybar Pass and his town and fort were both strongly built. When the letter of the Sikhs reached him, he ordered the Sikh messengers to be mounted on asses, paraded through the streets of Jalalabad, and turned out of the town.¹¹

This provocative news made the Sikhs very indignant. They started for Jalalabad immediately. The town of Ambeyta fell in their way, though five miles aside. The majority of its population consisted of Pathan and *Gujjar* Muslims. The eminent Muslim saint, Sheikh Abb-ul-Muali, lived there. His followers in that area used to make offerings to this *pir*. The town was, thus, quite prosperous. The Sikhs directed their attention to this place first. Sheikh Abb-ul-Muali offered them no resistance. The Sikhs, therefore, took no life there. They had an easy access to the town which yielded sufficient booty to compensate them for their efforts.¹²

Next was the turn of Nanauta. Nanu *Gujjar* had founded this town in the remote past, and had given his own name to it. In course of time the *Gujjars* were thrown out by the *Sayyads* who now occupied the town. Some Pathans and Sheikhs had also settled there later. Several residents of the Sayyad tribe had held high positions in public life. A Sayyad of this town had been appointed the commander of Saharanpur during the reign of Aurangzeb. He had some large mansions built in Nanauta.

When the Sikhs left Ambeyta and advanced further, a large number of *Gujjar* from Rampur turned up to join the Sikhs. They declared that they were the followers of Guru Nanak and that they came there to take part in the Sikh religious war. By this strategem they were able to secure the advantage of making their own town and its surrounding area safe from pillage. Moreover, they also became partners in the plunder of Nanauta. The *Gujjars* had some old accounts to settle with the Sayyads. The Sikhs entered Nanauta on July 11, 1710, A.D. The *Shaikhzadas* of the town were brave fighters and expert archers. They contested every inch the Sikh onslaught in their part of the town. Three hundred *Shaikhzadas* lost their lives on that day during the courageous fighting in the courtyard of Sheikh-Mohammad Afzal's house alone. This sharp, bloody contest led to an utter destruction of the town. The royal mansions of the *Sheikhs* and of the *Sayyads* were destroyed. The whole town was left in ruins. It has been called *Phuta Shahr* or the town in ruins, since that day.

In this way, half of the *Sarkar* of Saharanpur fell into the hands of the Sikhs and the town was rechristened as Bhagnagar.¹³ Banda Singh Bahadur "established his forces in the *Thanas* of Rampur, Nanauta, Jhujhana, Bakaur, Barsadai, Karana, Budhana, Kandhala. . . . The wayfarers and *qanungo* of Saharanpur had collaborated with the vanquished."¹⁴ The impact of the march of Banda Singh Bahadur in the summer of 1710 A.D. was so great that panic spread in the Yamuna-Gangetic Doab. The rich fled eastwards to Oudh or northwards into the hills. "The sight of one Sikh lancer on horseback was enough to terrorise a whole village."¹⁵ Needless to say, the Sikhs collected a large booty from Saharanpur, Behut, Nanauta and other surrounding villages.

Next, Banda Singh Bahadur moved towards Jalalabad (five miles from Nanauta). Jalal Khan,¹⁶ the *Faujdar* of Jalalabad, who received the information of Sikhs' advance, fortified himself by collecting men and ammunition. Banda Singh Bahadur sent a word to him to release the poor, innocent Sikhs who were cruelly confined by him. But he was made of a little harder stuff, as Sohan Singh puts it, and wrote back in stronger words. Said he: "Don't hope to find in me the *Nawabs* of Sadhaura or Sarhind and if you have to fight me with that much estimate of strength, you are sadly mistaken. You are welcome to fight, as I am sure you will soon reap the result of your folly. My army consists of *Khybri Pathans*, whom the very appearance of death even cannot intimidate. So bear you in mind that you will have to face such a people and not the timid inhabitants of Hindustan. And the Sikhs I will not set free under the threat of war."¹⁷ He made full preparations to resist the Sikhs. He had collected a sufficient quantity of food and war material in the fort. He had also called a large number of villagers to fight for him by the side of his regular army. The Sikhs approached Jalalabad straight from Nanauta. The ground between the two towns was overgrown with a big forest of butea frondosa trees (*keysoo, dhak or plaas*). As the Sikhs advanced half way, they saw the enemy forces waiting for them.

Jalal Khan had despatched his nephew Hazbar Khan, and his brother-in-law Ghulam Mohammad Khan to go ahead and meet the Sikhs and drive them back. The *Pathans* had under them 400 cavalry men, 1000 foot soldiers, and 4,000-5,000 strong special militia from the villages, besides hordes of the *Ghazis*.

The Sikhs rushed at the enemies head-long. It was a very bloody battle. Hazbar Khan and numerous *Ghazis* were killed.¹⁸ Jamal Khan and Pir Khan, the nephews of Jalal Khan, waited in the wings behind,

commanding fresh forces for the aid of the front where help was required. They chose their chance now and attacked the Sikhs. The fighting raged for three days. Then Dindar Ali Khan, the son of Jalal Khan, rushed to the battlefield at the head of fresh and specially selected seven hundred men. But before he had joined the battle, Jamal Khan and Pir Khan had been killed. The Sikh army had now encircled the Muslim defenders. Dindar Khan rushed upon the Sikhs ferociously. There were many casualties on both sides. Somehow, he forced his way to where the corpses of his brothers lay. And with the help of his men he got hold of the bodies of Jamal Khan, Pir Khan and other *Sardars* and wangled his way back through the Sikh encirclement. He then retreated to Jalalabad.¹⁹ It was about this time that Jalal Khan reported the invasion of the Sikhs to Emperor Bahadur Shah.²⁰

Banda Singh Bahadur and his followers besieged Jalalabad, situated on a high ground. A small stream, called the Krishna, flowed by it. It was the rainy season now and the stream was in flood. The fort and the town had large sheets of water standing all around it. The siege was maintained for about 20 days. The Sikhs failed to take the fort. Nor did Jalal Khan have the guts to come out, drive the Sikhs away and put an end to the siege. The Town was safe, but the countryside around it was devastated by the Sikhs. The Sikhs made repeated attempts to capture Jalalabad but were repulsed. According to Khazan Singh, "Banda applied ladders to the walls of the fort in order to get over it. Hundreds lost their lives in the attempts."²¹ Ultimately, Banda Singh Bahadur, without having been able to achieve a definite result even after 20 days of fighting and loss of several soldiers, raised the siege. He, at that time was said to be commanding an army of "seventy to eighty thousand strong and adequate arms and ammunition, was forced to lift the siege because of two factors: "First, he had received appeals from the Sikhs of the central Punjab to extend them help against the local *Faujdar*.²² Secondly, he had learnt that Emperor Bahadur Shah had already sent his vanguard to crush the rebellion in the Punjab and was likely to be there soon to retrieve the lost territories and glory of the Mughals. The rains then set in and flooded the surroundings. The river Krishna was also overflowing its banks. Now it was fatal to wade through water to reach the fort when the besieged were raining arrows and shots on them. Hence, Banda Singh Bahadur thought it advisable to give up the siege and retreated towards Karnal. Thus, Jalal Khan breathed a sigh of relief and took a full vengeance upon the Sikhs of Unarsa, who were cruelly done to death along with Kapoor Singh. The Sikh commanders, Ram Singh and Binod Singh, settled at the inn of Tirauri, now their

headquarters. The rest of the Sikh forces returned to the Punjab. The Governor of Delhi, Asaf Daula Asad Khan, too, felt some relief now. He dismissed Muhammad Ali Hamid Khan, the Governor of Saharanpur, and replaced him by Jalal Khan. He awarded Jalal Khan a robe of honour, along with this new appointment, on August 21, 1710. His son, Dindar Ali Khan, was also promoted to a higher rank in the army.²³

RISING IN MAJHA

Most of the baptised Sikhs were the residents of the Malwa, the Doaba, and the Majha, during the life time of Guru Gobind Singh. When Banda Singh Bahadur appeared in the Punjab, many Sikhs joined him in the fulfilment of his mission and when he conquered Sarhind and a large area around it. The Sikhs of the Majha had also started their plans and preparations for establishing a Sikh government there. Banda Singh Bahadur did not himself take part in the rising in Majha and the disturbances in the Doaba. They were certainly caused by his activities and victories in the Malwa. Therefore, it will be in the fitness of things and in all fairness to Banda Singh that a brief account of these events be given here.

"The victory of Sarhind," writes Ganda Singh, "had served as a signal for a general Sikh rising throughout the country, and it revived in them a new spirit of independence." They believed to have been providentially elevated to the position of conquerors and rulers, and refused to acknowledge the authority of their Mughal masters. Added to this were the orders of Banda Singh "addressed to the *Khalsa* of the Punjab (to the north of Sutlej) to devastate the territories on that side". The Sikhs, on their part, were only waiting since the battle of Chamkaur in December 1704, A.D. for an opportunity to settle the old scores with their persecutors. The entire *Khalsa* of Majha, and the Doaba, rose to end the Mughal rule and to establish the Sikh rule in the whole of the Punjab. "There was a sudden eruption and the Sikh volcanic lava flowed with such rapidity and force that it drove before it all who came in its way, Muslim or Hindu, officials or non-officials," writes Dr. Ganda Singh. About 8000 Sikhs of the Majha assembled at Amritsar and counselled together to overrun the territories of the Punjab. They collected arms and started considering themselves independent rulers and extorted *nazranas* from the surrounding villages.

The *Khalsa* of Majha discussed their plans and the way in which they were to advance. It was not safe to move towards Lahore where the

Governor and the imperial army were too strong for them to tackle. Qasoor, too, was well-defended by *Kheshgi Pathans*, who possessed well-trained armies and well defended forts. They agreed that the earliest area to attack was the Riarki. The *Khalsa* made up their mind and paid homage to their temple (Golden temple), said their prayers to their Gurus and God, and marched on the way to Riarki in Gurdaspur district. They compelled the *chaudhries* of every village that they approached, to pay them the tribute money and made them promise loyalty to the Sikh rule, and then moved ahead. Any village where the *chaudhries* were not traceable and yielding, was pillaged by them. The government police and revenue officers were dismissed and replaced by the *Khalsa*.

Next the *Khalsa* turned to the *Parganas* of Batala and Kalanaur.²⁴ These were exceptionally rich in those days. The *Hakim* of Batala, accompanied by his force, came to oppose them, but could not resist the assault. The Singhs then occupied Batala, turned out its government officials and established their own *thanas*. Then they ransacked Kalanaur, the residence of many a rich imperial noble. Batala was the market for commodities from Kashmir and Kabul. The conquest of these places added much to the resources of the Sikhs and they retraced their steps and marched towards Lahore. One group of theirs, mainly the Sikhs of Sathiala and Batala, pushed northwards and went to occupy the town and the territory of *pargana* of Pathankot.

The main body of the *Khalsa*, which went towards Lahore, ravaged the country up to the Shalimar gardens. Lahore at that time was governed by Sayyad Aslam Khan. He was very weak and timid. So he was very much frightened. He dared not come out of the city to oppose the Sikhs in an open battle. The *Mullas*²⁵ now took the lead. They raised a religious cry, appealed to the sentiments of the Mohammadans, planted a green banner, known as the Haidri Flag,²⁶ near the Idgah Mosque, and proclaimed a *Jehad*,²⁷ a crusade against the Sikhs. In response to their call, the Muslims collected at the Idgah. The rich Muslims contributed funds for this move, and a vilification campaign against Aslam Khan. At last, when Sayyed Aslam Khan heard that he was being publicly defamed as a coward, he deputed Mir Ata Ullah and Muhib Khan, a *zamindar* of Faridabad, to join the *Ghazis* with a force of five hundred horses and one thousand foot soldiers. The leading persons amongst the Hindus who joined this party of *Jehad* was a grandson of Todar Mal and son of Paharamal.²⁸

The Sikhs, on the other hand, divided their forces into four groups.

One was deputed to deal with the situation in the Majha—the districts of Amritsar and Lahore—and the second was sent to Riarki and Kandhi, in the district of Gurdaspur up to the foothills, the third was to invade the capital city of Lahore, and the fourth was to remain in reserve as a moving column to be used in an emergency. The Lahore group established its firm base in the village of Bharat on the bank of the Ravi. Here, Mehta Bhagwant Rai, the *Qanungo* of the *pargana* of Neshta Bharli, in which Bharat was situated, had built a small brickfort which is mentioned by historians as Qila Bhagwant Rai. The Sikhs occupied it. It served as a rallying centre and as a place of defence. The Haidri Flag arrived there and the Sikhs in the meantime collected their supplies and put themselves in a defensive position. The crusaders and the imperial troops besieged the fort. The *Khalsa* did not come into the open to fight, but showered bullets and arrows from the walls of the fort. There was considerable bloodshed on both sides. The Sikhs then decided to leave the fort. So they sallied forth one night and broke through the enemy's lines. In an instant, they were beyond the reach of the besiegers. The crusaders were greatly disappointed at this slipping away of the Sikhs from their grasp. The crusaders then returned to Lahore. To cover up their shameful retreat, they started insulting the Hindus of the city and threatened their own rulers.

When the Sikhs heard of this state of affairs, they again collected at Kotla Begam, near Chamiari, a few miles from Lahore, and resumed plundering and ravaging. The crusade (*jihad*) was again proclaimed and a large force collected to oppose the Sikhs. Soon, they came face to face with the Sikhs at the foot of Kotla Begam. The Sikhs came out of their enclosure and fell upon them. A desperate battle ensued, resulting in huge losses on both sides. Both the parties were balanced. Just at this stage the Sikhs made a bold attack, which turned the tables against the crusaders who could not withstand the onslaught, and fled. The *Ghazis* left the battlefield. The Sikhs, therefore, prudently took into their possession the material left behind by the fleeing *Ghazis* rather than pursue them further in that most inclement weather. They nursed their wounded and collected the booty, and retired behind their defences to spend the night there. At this time Banda Singh Bahadur was fighting against Jalal Khan across the Jamuna. The crestfallen crusaders returned towards Lahore. But their misfortunes had not ended yet. Another blow and perhaps the severest of all, was still waiting for them. On their way back they stopped at the village of Bhilowal for a night's rest. The regular soldiers were lodged in the fort and the others lay down to sleep

in an open place, unmindful of any threat from the Sikhs. The Sikhs, on the other hand, were cautiously and secretly pursuing them closely with the intention of striking another blow before they could get to Lahore. Early on the following morning, before daybreak, they issued forth from the neighbouring bushes and pounced upon the crusaders who were taken unawares. To quote Ganda Singh: "The Muhammadans offered no united front and most of them were cut down before they could be ready for resistance." This was like driving the last nail into the coffin of the enemy. The remaining crusaders now dispersed to their homes and their leaders came back to Lahore "hiding their faces". The crusaders lost very heavily in men and horses. Several hundreds of them, including Murtaza Khan and the grandson of Todar Mal, the leader of the Hindu allies, were killed, and horses and property worth several thousands fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Except the occupation of Lahore proper, practically the whole of the territory in the Majha and the Riarki tracts lay prostrate at their feet. Even after this Muhammadans appealed to their religious leaders to gird up their loins for revenge, but they dared not take the risk.

RISING IN JULLUNDUR DOAB

The Bist Jullundur Doab consisting of the present districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, could not remain unaffected. According to Ganda Singh, "Being on the border of the province of Sarhind, which had been conquered and occupied by Banda Singh Bahadur, was the first to be electrified with the spirit of rising and independence." So, the *Khalsa* of Doaba, following the footsteps of their brethren in the south, also embarked on a campaign of conquest. They took up arms and within a few weeks turned out the petty officials in the districts of Jullundur Doab and appointed Sikh *tehsildars* and *thanedars* in their place.²⁹ It was mainly the work of the local Sikhs and only a small detachment from the south sent across the Sutlej by the main force at Sarhind joined them.³⁰

Shamas Khan, a Khalafzai *Pathan* of Kasur, was then the *Faujdar* of Jullundur Doab. He was the only son of Peer Khan, whose father, Sultan Ahmad Khan Khalafzai, had rendered yeoman's service to prince Muhammad Azam. Peer Khan held a high rank under Bahadur Shah and it was in recognition of his meritorious services that, after his death, his son Nur Khan, under the popular title of Shamas Khan, obtained the *Faujdari* of Doaba Bist Jullundur with his capital at Sultanpur. Inspired

and encouraged by their small successes, the Sikhs in Jullunder Doab now considered themselves strong enough to face the *Faujdar* himself. They sent him a letter in the form of a *parwana*, calling upon him to submit. But, according to the author of *Banda the Brave*, this ultimatum was sent by Banda Singh himself, which read: "The only means of your safety are to pay homage to the *Khalsa* and in future consider himself their tributary, and to send with the bearer a considerable quantity of ammunition, and come yourself with all your treasure."³¹ They despatched this letter to him by two Sikhs. Shamas Khan consulted his nobles and military officials, who all took oaths of fidelity and unity to stand by him till their last breath, and they swore by the holy words of the *Quran*. To gain time for his warlike preparations, he gave the messengers an evasive reply that he would soon come to meet the Sikhs. He also sent to them a little quantity of lead and powder and wrote to them that he could not send more for want of conveyance which he required for his friends and nobles. The merchants in the *bazaar* and the government stores, he said, had heaps of powder, which could be supplied in any quantity provided sufficient arrangements were made for conveyance.³²

Shamas Khan was a clever man. So, on the one hand, he sent a small quantity of lead and powder to the Sikhs, assuring more to follow, and, on the other, proclaimed a *jihad* with the beat of the drum. The Sikhs took his message as genuine and relaxed in the hope of getting more. During the interregnum, Shamas Khan prepared for the fight and collected his men and material. It is said that more than a hundred thousand men were collected by him, in addition to large hordes of crusaders. They then proceeded against the Sikhs. On hearing of this anti-Sikh crusade and the advance of Shamas Khan with such an army and all the equipment of war, the Sikhs moved with all their force, numbering seventy to eighty thousand, according to Khafi Khan. This seems to have been very much exaggerated by Khafi Khan. According to Ganda Singh, "In all probability, it was at this time that they called upon Banda Singh and the Sikhs in the Gangetic Doab to hurry to the Punjab."³³ This seems to be plausible, too. The Sikhs then reached Rahon—a town 14 miles from Sultanpur. They occupied here the mounds of some old brick kilns and used the brick-kiln as a *garhi* (fortress), threw lines of entrenchments around their camp and got ready for the battle. From this place, as Khafi Khan relates, the Sikhs sent out patrols in all directions and issued threatening orders to the *chaudhries*, the revenue payers and the *qanungos*, the revenue officers, calling upon them to submit.

The combined forces of Shamas Khan and his allies reached Rahon and attacked the Sikhs. The battle began with guns and muskets. The forces of Shamas Khan fell upon the Sikhs like locusts on a crop from all sides with cries of "Ali, Ali and Allah-u-Akbar". The Sikhs replied with volleys of their cannons and their war cry "Sat Sri Akal", but they were completely at a disadvantage due to the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. The only way out of the impasse for them was to fight a rearguard action and retreat into the fort of Rahon.

Shamas Khan besieged the fort. The battle raged between the Sikhs within the fort and the *Ghazis* outside it. It was October 11, 1710, A.D. The Sikhs saw no advantage in holding the fort against the overwhelming enemy. They, therefore, slipped out of the fort about midnight, breaking safely through a weak point in the enemy encirclement. Shamas Khan, too, thanked his stars for this easy riddance. He did not pursue the Sikhs. He reappointed his officers in Rahon and marched back to Sultanpur. The *Ghazis* who had survived the battle, returned to their homes, thanking God for an escape from the harm's way. In this connection, Ganda Singh remarks: "Apparently, he (Shamas Khan) felt tired and was looking for an opportunity to leave the Sikhs alone, especially when he thought of their being reinforced by the terrible Banda Singh, the conqueror of Sadhaura, Sarhind and Saharanpur."³⁴

Shamas Khan, satisfied with the "so-called victory", returned to his headquarter (Sultanpur), stationing his men at Rahon. But, as per their plan, the vigilant Sikhs came back at once after the evacuation of the imperial forces, attacked the garrison, put *faujdar's* men to the sword and reoccupied the fort. They then placed their own *thana* there. The tactics of war, says Dr. Ganda Singh, 'is peculiarly a Sikh tactic and as so often been used by them in their wars with the Mughals, the Durranis and the local officials, has generally been misunderstood and misinterpreted a defeat. Their trick flights were many a time mistaken for their actual flights and under this impression the enemy followed them up, but they were soon disillusioned on finding the Sikhs turning upon their heels, pouncing upon their pursuers and cutting them down to the last man. The battle of Rahon was fought on the October 11, 1710, A.D., and its report (by Shamas Khan) was received by Emperor Bahadur Shah on October 25, while he was at Sonapat. "Thus the progress of the *Khalsa*," writes Sohan Singh, "was now uncontested and uncurbed, till it received a fatal blow in the time of Farrukh Siyar."³⁵

After the occupation of Rahon, the Sikhs moved on to Jullundur. The *Pathans* of this place, so terrified that they found their safety in fleeing Rahon, fell into the hands of the Sikhs without any resistance from the officials and residents. Hoshiarpur followed suit, and like all others in the neighbourhood, its ruler acknowledged the authority of the conquerors. Thus, before long, practically the whole of the Bist Jullundur Doab came under the sway of the Sikhs. Shamas Khan himself was not allowed to remain at rest at Sultanpur and, according to the *Maasir-ul-Umra*, twenty-two battles were fought between the Sikhs and himself.³⁶ Consequently, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Batala, Kalanaur, Pathankot and other places came under the domain of Banda Singh's men. The Sikhs had revolted and removed the Mughal officers between the Sutlej and the Ravi and threatened to occupy Lahore. However, the capital town of Lahore remained under the Mughal authority and the surrounding area came under the Sikh rule. This victorious campaign of the Sikhs between Delhi and Lahore created so much terror in the minds of the Mughal aristocracy that it was felt that "there was no noble daring enough to march from Delhi against them".³⁷

About the demoralization in the Mughal aristocracy and glorious successes of Banda Singh Bahadur, S. Khushwant Singh observed thus: "In those fateful days, had Banda shown more enterprise he could have captured Delhi and Lahore and so changed the entire course of Indian history. But the otherwise daring Banda Singh Bahadur showed a lack of decision which proved fatal to his dreams."³⁸ And if Bahadur Shah had not quit the Deccan, which he did in A.D. 1710, and marched towards the Punjab with all his imperial forces "there is every reason to think," says Malcolm, "the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these . . . invaders."³⁹ The historic role must be judged on the basis of actual happenings and activities, says Dr. Raj Pal Singh, not on "ifs" and "buts". Therefore, while judging the role of Banda Singh Bahadur during "those fateful days", one cannot close one's eyes to the historical realities. It is a historical fact that notwithstanding the sporadic successes of revolts of either the Marathas or Rajputs or Jats of Bharatpur or the Sikhs, Bahadur Shah held the reins of administration fast in his hands. In matters of state, his word was final. Therefore, when he learnt about the Sikh obduracy and spirit of defiance in the key province of the Mughal empire, he immediately started making strenuous efforts to deal with the insurgency of Banda Singh Bahadur. It is difficult to accept the argument of learned Khushwant Singh, Malcolm and Iradat Khan that Banda lacked power of taking "decision" or did not show "more enterprise" to capture Lahore or Delhi. In fact, the provincial officers,

where the Sikh rebellion had broken out, were not totally weak or insignificant as had been tried to be made out by Iradat Khan or S. Khushwant Singh. As discussed earlier in this chapter, in spite of their best efforts, the forces of Banda Singh Bahadur had to leave the fortress of Jalalabad unconquered. Likewise, their efforts to capture Lahore had been nullified by Aslam Khan. It was not lack of enterprising spirit on the part of Banda Singh Bahadur that Lahore or Delhi were not captured, but it was due to the relentless efforts made by the Mughal officers that checked the Sikh advance towards Delhi or Lahore. This author agrees with Dr. Raj Pal that Banda Singh Bahadur had sent his forces to take over Delhi also. But in this respect we have to agree with S.S. Gandhi and Iradat Khan that "their further progress southwards from Thanesar was opposed by Sardar Khan, a Muhammadan Rajput *Zamindar*. If it has not been for his exertions, there was nothing really to stop their advancing upon Delhi. It is true that Asad Khan or viceregent was there, and as a governor of the province in which Sarhind was included, it was his duty to have taken active measure to restore order. But he did nothing, probably because he was old and indifferent."⁴⁰ So we can conclude that Banda Singh Bahadur made serious efforts to capture both Lahore and Delhi, but did not find enough strength and opportunity to eject the ruling Mughal officers from there. Before he could accomplish his plans to capture either the provincial capital (Lahore) or the national capital (Delhi), Banda Singh Bahadur had to face the big Mughal army led by Emperor Bahadur Shah, advancing towards his recently conquered territories.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 672; Satish Chandra, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
2. Quoted by S.S. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
3. Sohan Singh Seetal, *Rise of the Sikh Power in the Panjab*, p. 71.
4. Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
5. Narang, G.C., *op. cit.*, p. 141.
6. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 655. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, as told by its own Historians, Vol. VII, p. 416.
7. Muhammad Harisi, *Ibrat Namah*, p. 82, Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 75. Khafi Khan, in *the Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II, p. 654, gives his name as Ali Muhammad Khan. Sohan Singh Seetal also has accepted this name, see, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

8. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 654. Quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
9. Muhammad Harisi, *Ibrat Namah*, 41 a-b, Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 77. See Irvine, *Later Mughals*, p. 101.
10. Descendants of the Muslim Saints, generally rich, influential families.
11. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
12. Karam Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, pp. 86-87.
13. Akhbarat, dated July 1, 1710.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
16. Jalal Khan was the son of Mir Hazar Khan. He was a descendant of the Orak Zai tribe of the *Afghans*, who had migrated to India during the time of Shah Jahan. He had been granted some villages as his estate. Jalal Khan succeeded Hazar Khan as the landlord of those villages. He had helped Aurangzeb during the latter's war against Dara Shikoh. He was granted some more villages in the *Pargana* of *thana* Bhawan as a reward for his services. He had destroyed Khera Manihar and built a fort on its ruin and called it Jalalabad.
17. Sohan Singh, *Banda the Brave*, pp. 95-96.
18. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhib-ul-Labab*, p. 655, Quoted by G.S. Deol, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
19. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.
20. Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 81. Sohan Singh Seetal writes in his book, *Rise of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 76: "Jalal Khan wrote a report of all this fighting to the Emperor that was received in Delhi on July 1, 1710 A.D."
21. Khazan Singh, *History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion*, Part I, Lahore (1914), p. 212.
22. Khafi Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 652, Vol. II.
23. Sohan Singh Seetal, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
24. The place where Akbar the Great had been crowned.
25. The *Mullas* and other religious fanatics, who were mostly at the bottom of all religious persecution of the non-Muslims and who now suffered most at the hands of the *Khalsa*, were fleeing to Lahore. Great consternation prevailed there.
26. Muslim flag named after Hazrat Ali.
27. Holy war.
28. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
30. Sohan Singh Seetal, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
31. Sohan Singh, *Banda the Brave*, p. 116.

32. Irvine William, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
33. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
35. Sohan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
36. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
37. Iradat Khan, Quoted by Ganda Singh, p. 101 and S.S. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
38. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
39. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 79. Also see, Irvine, *Later Mughals*, p. 98.
40. S.S. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Bahadur Shah and the Sikhs

The report of the Sikh uprising had been received by the Emperor near the Narbada in December 1709 A.D.¹ This was followed by the reports of the further progress of the activities of the Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur. The Emperor who had been alarmed by reports of the Sikh aggression sent by Asad Khan from Delhi and by various Waqa Nawises,² was hastening back to the north in order to suppress the rebellion. Bahadur Shah reached Ajmer on May 30, 1710, A.D., after a successful expedition against his younger brother Mohammad Kam Bakhsh.³ He had come to Rajputana to reduce the refractory chiefs, Raja Jai Singh Kachhwaha and Raja Ajit Singh, son of Jaswant Singh Rathor.⁴ It was here that the alarming news about the seriousness of Sikh rebellion reached the Emperor, which changed the situation because its gravity invited the Emperor's immediate attention to affairs in the north. The Emperor did not even enter his capital to take rest after his southern successes, but marched straight on towards Sarhind to punish the Sikhs. The possible consequences of a popular uprising such as that of the Sikhs, in close proximity to the imperial capital and the strategic north-western area, were considered to be more dangerous than the pending quarrel with the Rajputs. . . . Hence, a settlement was hurriedly patched up with the Rajput Rajas. Bahadur Shah hastened towards the Punjab from Ajmer after he had heard the tales of woes and sufferings of the plundered inhabitants of Sarhind, Thanesar and Sadhaura. The stories of

sufferings of his co-religionists and also of the members of the ruling aristocracy lent poignancy to his hitherto resolve of destroying the Sikhs root and branch.⁵ On hearing about the activities of the Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur, Emperor Bahadur Shah took steps to suppress them. He sent a big contingent towards Saharanpur under the command of Feroz Khan Mewati and himself decided to reach Punjab to take steps to suppress the disturbances. He left Ajmer on June 27, 1710, A.D. accompanied by Chatar Sal Bundela and other nobles. En route to Punjab, he issued orders to Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf-ud-Daula Asad Khan, Khan-i-Durrani, *Subedar* of Awadh Muhammad Amin Khan Chin, *Faujdar* of Muradabad Khan Jahan, *Subedar* of Allahabad Sayyid Abdullah Khan Barha, and others to join with their forces without delay, the forces of Asad Khan, the *Subedar* of Delhi, in his expedition against the Sikhs. The Emperor's camp moved via Rupnagar, Sambhar, Rasulpur, Pragpur, Narnaul and Sonapat. En route Bahadur Shah kept on issuing important orders to the Mughal officers to mobilize their forces against Banda Singh Bahadur. On August 26, 1710, A.D., Abu Muhammad Khan was "given a *Khilat* and told that the *Zamindar* of Kumaou be sent to chastise Banda Singh Bahadur". On August 28, 1710, A.D., *farmans* were issued in the names of *zamindars* of Srinagar (Garhwal) and Sirmaur (Nahan) regarding administering of punishment to the Nanak worshippers.⁶

Banda Singh Bahadur was aware that it would be very difficult for him to face the Mughal power with the meagre resources at his disposal. For broadening his base of support, he wrote letters to Raja Jai Singh of Amber and Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur soliciting their help in this hour of reckoning against the Mughals.⁷ Similar letters were despatched by him to the ruler of Jawalapur.⁸ He was also reported to be in touch with the Mughal aristocracy for their help and cooperation. For example, on September 23, 1710 A.D. it was "conveyed to the Emperor that Bakht Mal, *Peshkar* of Muhammad Yar Khan, Nazim of Shahjahanbad (Delhi), was in correspondence with the Sikhs". But none came to his help.⁹ On the other hand, Bahadur Shah tried to weaken the hold and influence of Banda Singh Bahadur on the Sikhs by beseeching the cooperation of Ajit Singh, the adopted son of Mata Sundari (wife of Guru Gobind Singh) who was staying at Delhi. The Emperor deputed Raja Chhatar Sal Bundela to bring him from Delhi in his presence. When Ajit Singh and Chhatar Sal appeared in the camp of Bahadur Shah on September 23, 1710 A.D., the Emperor gave presents to both the Raja and the Sahibzada. "The Raja received *Mohars* and *Khilat* and Ajit Singh—*Mohars*, a sword, a shield, and a *Khilat*."¹⁰

On September 29, 1710, A.D., Bahadur Shah, "after a quarter of the night had passed", called Munim Khan's son Mahabat Khan "into his presence and presenting him with a *Khilat* sent him to punish the Nanak worshippers. He was asked to stay at Karnal and furnish the account of the areas between Delhi and Karnal to the Emperor. The services of Nusrat Khan, Ghulam Nabi Quli Khan, Raja Chhatar Sal Bundela, and Sayyid Hasan Khan were drafted to help him. Bahadur Shah arrived at Sonapat on October 22, 1710, A.D. In the meantime, fearing lest there should be any disguised Sikhs among the bearded Hindus in the royal camp, an order was issued on September 8, 1710, A.D. for all Hindus employed in the imperial office to shave off their beards". There was no Sikh at all in the whole establishment and the Hindu *Peshkars* and *Diwans* submissively obeyed the royal order, shaved off their beards, and received from the Emperor *Khilats* for their implicit obedience and loyal service. At Sonapat, on October 26, the Emperor got the news of the battle of Rahon fought on October 12, 1710, A.D. Here he learnt the news of a couple of engagements with the Sikhs.

The advance contingents sent by the Emperor under the command of Feroze Khan Mewati, Wazid Khan (*Faujdar* of Jammu) and Mahabat Khan, after having re-established their authority on the towns of Sonapat, Kaithal, Panipat and Karnal, came face to face with the forces of Banda Singh Bahadur near Amin (Thanesar) on October 16, 1710, A.D. The Sikh contingent led by Baba Binod Singh and Baba Ram Singh won an early victory over the contingent led by Mahabat Khan. However, the army of Mahabat Khan faced the Sikh onslaught valiantly. On October 20, 1710 A.D., it was reported to the Emperor that Feroz Khan had "got great victory and chopped off three hundred heads of the rebels and sent the same to the Emperor". Elated at the news, the Emperor ordered that "the heads be displayed on the route. The heads were mounted on spears and exhibited". Feroz Khan Mewati was given one lakh rupees and appointed Governor of Sarhind in supersession of his previous orders for the appointment of Zain-ud-din Khan.¹¹ Emperor also sent six dresses of honour for him and his allies on October 30, 1710, A.D. Hotly chased by the Mughal forces, Baba Binod Singh and Ram Singh escaped from Amin, Thanesar, Shahabad and Mustafabad and reached Sadhaura.

On the Emperor's arrival at Azamabad-Tirawari (Alamgirpur) Rustamdil Khan presented to him a gold studded parasol that had fallen into Firoz Khan's hands at Thanesar and informed him that Firoz Khan had moved from Thanesar towards Shahabad in pursuit of the Sikhs.

While Firoz Khan Mewati was busy with the Sikhs, Bayzid Khan Khesghi pushed on towards the north. Shamas Khan, from Bist Jullundur, was also encouraged by the Emperor's march against the Sikhs and the return of his own uncle Bayzid Khan. He collected a large host of villagers from the Bist Jullundur Doab and marched upon Sarhind, says Dr. Ganda Singh. The combined forces of Bayzid Khan, Shamas Khan and Umar Khan encountered the Sikhs in the garden of Yaqub Khan. Baj Singh, the Governor of Sarhind, was then absent on some expedition. His brother Sukha Singh and Sham Singh offered a bold front, but they were outnumbered. Sukha Singh died while fighting with the Mughals, and the Sikhs retired to the fort of Sarhind. Bahadur Shah reached Okala on November 27, 1710, A.D., and ordered Muhammad Amin Khan Chin Bahadur to move upon Sarhind by forced marches and lay siege to the fort. But before his arrival there, the fort had fallen into the hands of Shamas Khan and he had despatched 300 heads of the Sikhs killed in the battle, and some colours and rockets to the Emperor, which were received at Sadhaura on December 4, 1710, A.D. The loss of his opportunity for gaining credit for the capture of Sarhind perturbed Mohammad Amin Khan very much and he became an avowed enemy of Shamas Khan. He reported to the Emperor that Shamas Khan had collected a large force with evil intentions and that his movements were not without danger to the peace of the country. Poor Shamas Khan, against all hopes of being raised to a higher rank, was treated most ungratefully. He was dismissed from the *Faujdari* of Doaba Bist Jullundur, and Isa Khan Manj¹² was appointed in his place with the rank of 1500 *Zat*, 1000 *Sawar*.¹³ Firoz Khan Mewati was ordered to restore Emperor's authority in the rural areas.¹⁴

The Sikhs from Thanesar and Sarhind had retreated towards Lohgarh when Bahadur Shah arrived at Sadhaura on December 4, 1710, A.D. Banda Singh Bahadur had also come there to strengthen his fortifications. In the royal camp it was rumoured that Banda Singh Bahadur was a "most powerful magician, greater even than the one who made a calf to talk, he could turn a bullet from its course and could work such spells that spear and sword had little or no effect upon his followers".¹⁵ Owing to these idle rumours the Emperor and the nobles and the soldiers were much disturbed mentally and were disheartened and terror-stricken.

On December 4, 1710, A.D., a strong Mughal force under Rustamdil Khan advanced from its base at Sadhaura towards Lohgarh to examine the position of Banda's defences. At a distance of 5 km they were suddenly attacked by Banda Singh's troops. Khafi Khan writes: "It is

impossible for me to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in their *faqir* dress struck terror into the royal troops. The number of the dead and dying of the imperialists was so large that, for a time, it seemed they were losing ground. A nephew of Firoz Khan Mewati was killed and his son wounded."¹⁶ In this battle Banda Singh Bahadur lost 1,500 (fifteen hundred) Sikhs and two *sardars*.¹⁷ This battle was fought on December 5, 1710, A.D. Banda Singh Bahadur cut off convoys and other detachments and killed two or three *Faujdar*s. It rained for four or five days and weather became very cold. Thousands of soldiers of the imperial force fell ill and many horses died. Their stench was unbearable. The soldiers attributed this calamity to the sorcery of Banda Singh Bahadur.

Another big contingent under the command of Emperor's son, Prince Rafi-us-Shan, was ordered to reinforce Rustamdil Khan. Kanwar Khan in his *Tazkirat-ul-Salatin* writes: "This humble person was then present with the troops of Prince Rafi-us-Shan, and saw with his own eyes that everyone of the cursed Sikhs came out of the entrenchments, challenged the imperial troops and after great struggle and trial, fell under the swords of the *Ghazis*."¹⁸ And with the setting of the sun, they retreated towards the eastern mountains and fell back upon the fort of Lohgarh. Rustamdil Khan was then raised to the *mansab* of 4,000 *Zat* and 3000 *Sawar* with the title of *Ghazi Khan Rustam-e-Jang*.

Rustamdil Khan made a further advance by 4 km and reached the stream Som. From there the fort of Lohgarh was visible. It was perched on the top of a hill. Between the stream Som and Lohgarh lay a dense forest. It produced frightful sounds at night. The imperial camp arrived there on December 9, 1710, A.D. The Prime Minister Munim Khan and his son Mahabat Khan were assigned the duty to guard the royal camp. The following day on December 10, 1710, A.D., the imperial army, 60,000 strong, pushed forward in battle array so as to surround the fort of Lohgarh on all sides. Wazir Munim Khan, his son Mahabat Khan and Chhatarsal Bundela were in charge of the right wing. Udet Singh Bundela and Churaman Jat commanded the left wing. Rustamdil Khan was in the centre when they reached within the range of the Sikh guns, they were heavily shelled. The Mughal troops entered the trenches at the foot of the hill. The Sikhs fought hard, but they were repulsed. The survivors retreated up the hill and large number of Mughals were also killed.¹⁹

The fort of Lohgarh was small. There was no space for storing large quantities of grain and fodder. Their supplies had run short. From the

top of their fort they bargained, with signs of their hands and eyes, with the grain-dealers with the royal army, and bought what they could from them at two and three rupees a *seer* of grain. They threw their *chadars* or sheets from above and pulled it up with ropes. A handful or two of it was distributed to each of the besieged, many of whom died of starvation. Dr. G.S. Deol says that one Diwan Hardyal, a prominent figure in the royal camp, an admirer of the Sat Guru, helped Banda Singh Bahadur with provisions as far as he could. But this could no longer suffice. They were also said to have eaten their horses and other beasts of burden to appease their hunger. The last faint hope now left to the Sikhs was the desperate chance of cutting through the enemy. A Sikh Gulab Singh by name, a Hindu convert, Bakshi of the *Khalsa* force, had a great resemblance with Banda Singh Bahadur. He put on Banda Singh's clothes and took up position in his place. At 3 o'clock in the morning on December 11, 1710, A.D., a hollow trunk of a big tamarind tree lying in the lower parts of the hill was filled with gun powder. The guns in the fort were also kept ready to fire simultaneously. Just when the gunpowder in the tree trunk was blown off and the guns in the fort fired, Banda Singh and his men escaped in the great confusion prevailing in the Mughal camp. They safely disappeared into the Sirmaur hills²⁰ or towards the mountains of the Barfi Raja of Nahan.²¹

With the sunrise on December 11, 1710 A.D. the imperial forces delivered a vehement assault on the fort. The Mughal troopers continued climbing the hill. Gulab Singh and thirty of his companions were captured. A number of women and children of the neighbouring village had taken up shelter in the Sikh fort. They were taken prisoners. The booty in the fort comprised many horses and camels, five elephants, three big guns, seventeen light guns, a few muskets and swords, a canopy with silver poles, gold and silver coins worth eight lakhs of rupees, and from underground gold coins to the value of twenty lakhs of rupees.²²

There were great rejoicings in the imperial camp. On December 12, 1710, A.D., a great *darbar* was held and various honours were conferred on all the commanders. In the evening it was discovered that the real Banda Singh Bahadur had escaped and that it was a duplicate who had been captured. According to Khafi Khan, "The hawk had flown and an owl had been caught."²³ All were thoroughly disappointed. The Mughal camp wore a mourning appearance. The Emperor summoned Prime Minister Munim Khan and administered to him a sharp rebuke. The Wazir took the insult to heart, fell ill and died two and a half months

later, when the Emperor was halting at Badhauri, not far from Sadhaura, on his way to Lahore.²⁴

On December 13, 1710, A.D., orders were despatched to the Rajas of Srinagar and Nahan calling upon them to sieze the Sikh leader and despatch him to the royal presence. Hamid Khan was sent in pursuit with the orders: "If they caught the Sikh chief they were to take him prisoner alive, if they could not, they were to take the Barfi Raja and bring him to the presence." As Banda Singh and the Sikhs had effected their escape into or through the territory of the Raja of Nahan, the crime of the Raja was considered to be more potent. The imperial nobles, finding no trace of the Sikhs, poured their bile upon Raja Bhup Prakash of Nahan and brought him to the royal camp near the village of Puri on December 22, 1710, A.D. He was thrown into prison and about thirty of the leading hillmen who were deputed by his old mother to plead for his release, were executed on March 23, 1711, A.D. The fate reserved for Raja Bhup Parkash was rather pitiable. He and Gulab Singh, Banda Singh's substitute, were both put in an iron cage, sent to Delhi and imprisoned in the Red Fort. Gulab Singh's thirty companions were beheaded.²⁵ Raja Fateh Singh of Srinagar, living in inaccessible mountains, could not be arrested.

After the despatch of orders to the Rajas of Nahan and Srinagar for the capture of the Sikh leader Banda Singh Bahadur, and of Hamid Khan Bahadur in pursuit of him, Emperor Bahadur Shah moved his camp towards Puri and Sadhaura, Sarwarpur, Rasulpur and Badhauri, where his Prime Minister Munim Khan passed away, he reached Rugar on April 30, 1710, A.D. He crossed the Sutlej on May 17, 1711, A.D., and reached Hoshiarpur on June 9, 1711, A.D. The river Beas was crossed on June 23. He arrived at Kahnuwan on July 17 where he enjoyed hunting water fowls. He reached Lahore on August 11, 1711, A.D. Some time afterwards, the Emperor developed signs of insanity and died on February 28, 1712, A.D.

After his escape from Lohgarh, Banda Singh Bahadur arrived at Kiratpur on December 12, 1710, A.D. The escape of Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikhs was in fact a defeat for the Emperor and his crusading forces whose every effort to capture the Sikh leader had hopelessly failed and he had escaped, says Dr. Ganda Singh, sword in hand, cutting through the lines of over sixty thousand horse and foot. After his tactical escape from Lohgarh, Banda Singh Bahadur did not lose heart nor was he worried about the loss of his stronghold and the treasure. Banda

Singh Bahadur knew that he was labouring under a disadvantage of numerical strength against the imperial odds, and that he suffered the loss for want of ammunition and provisions. No doubt, he conquered some six districts of the then Punjab from Panipat to Lahore, but it was purely a military occupation and he had not as yet been able to establish an indisputably complete mastery over them. Whatever small force he had was distributed over the conquered territories. And, as all this from the occupation of Samana to the evacuation of Lohgarh, had taken place in the short space of less than a year, it was beyond his means to collect provision large enough to stand a siege by sixty thousand imperial troops. Dr. Ganda Singh says that in spite of all this, Banda Singh and a handful of Sikhs foiled the attempt of the great Mughals with all the resources of the vast Mughal empire at their command. Banda Singh Bahadur knew that his strength lay in the spirit of the Sikhs, which was unconquerable. So, within a period of two weeks he started issuing *hukamnamas* to the *Khalsa* throughout the length and breadth of the country. One such *hukamnama* dated December 26, 1710, A.D., was sent by him to the *Khalsa* of Jaunpur in U.P., inviting them to gather at Anandpur immediately. It is reproduced below in English:

—Seal—

Deg O Teg O Fateh O Nusrat-i-Bedirang
Yaft as Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.²⁶

Ik Onkar Fateh Darshan.²⁷

This is the order of Sri *Sacha Sahib*.²⁸ The Guru shall save the entire *Khalsa* of Jaunpur. Repeat Guru Guru, the life shall be purified. You are the *Khalsa* of the great Akal Purkh. On seeing this *hukam*, repair to the presence, wearing the five arms. Live according to the *Rahit* of the *Khalsa*. Do not use *bhang*, tobacco, post (poppy capsules), wine or any other intoxicant. Do not eat meat, fish and onion.²⁹ Commit no theft, adultery or any sexual immorality. We have brought about the age of *Sat-Yuga*. Love one another.

I enjoin that he who lives according to the *Rahit* of the *Khalsa* shall be saved by the Guru.

Poh 12, Sammat L

(December 26, 1710 A.D.)

This *hukamnama* exhorted the Sikhs to join him fully armed in the service of the *Khalsa*. On getting these letters several contingents of the Sikhs from various parts of the Punjab assembled at Kiratpur. When Banda Singh felt that now he was strong enough to take up expeditions, he started for the hills to punish hill chiefs of the Shiwaliks.

The first among them on whom Banda Singh Bahadur focussed his attention was the Raja of Kahlur, Bhim Chand by name. The main reason of his becoming the first target was because of his having played a role against Guru Gobind Singh in his fights against the hill chiefs and the imperial troops. As usual with Banda Singh, a messenger was sent with a *parwana*, calling upon him to submit. But the Raja, on the other hand, expecting the attack by the Sikhs, had requisitioned the services of leading *zamindars* of the Jullundur Doab and the *Rajas* of the neighbouring hills who now strengthened the fortress of Bilaspur. The Sikhs attacked the fortress so fiercely that the combined forces of Raja Bhim Chand and his allies was no match for the army of Banda Singh Bahadur which slaughtered them ruthlessly. It is estimated that over 1300 were slain in the fight. The town of Bilaspur was then looted and "it yielded immense booty to the Sikhs". The defeat of Raja Bhim Chand disheartened the other hill chiefs of the Shiwaliks. So, in order to avoid the horrors that might befall them in case of resistance, they thought it better to submit to Banda Singh. Many of them came into Banda Singh's camp to greet him and offered *Nazrana*, assuring him of their loyalty. Raja Sidhsen of Mandi also accepted the overlordship of Banda Singh.³⁰ Raja Mansingh of Kullu is said to have unsuccessfully attempted to capture Banda Singh, who dodged him and escaped towards Mandi.³¹ It is also learnt that Banda Singh went into the realm of Raja Udai Singh of Chamba and was married to a princess from whom he begot his son Ajai Singh.³² After this short sojourn in the hilly tract, he (Banda Singh) went towards Jammu and defeated its *Faujdar*. Then he came to a quiet place in south of Jammu and lived in a *dera* there for some time. It was here that a son, whom he named Ajai Singh, was born to Rajkumari of Chamba, towards the end of 1711 A.D.³³

Banda Singh did not stay in the hills for long, while the Emperor was still at Sadhaura busy in the lower hills. In the beginning of 1711 A.D. (February-March), in about three months from the date of the fall of Lohgarh, the Sikh chief issued from the hills near Raipur and Bahrapur, and began to extend his influence in the direction of Gurdaspur,³⁴ where he built a fort and collected stores of munition, grain and fodder.³⁵ Bazid Khan was the Governor of Jammu at that time. He

was also called Rutb-ud-din Keshgi. He had been joined by his nephew Shamas Khan after his fight in the battle of Rahon and his subsequent removal from the office of the *Faujdar* of the Doaba. So both the uncle and the nephew came and met the Sikhs near Bahrampur (Gurdaspur District). After some fighting the *Khalsa* retreated as a part of their tactical move. That retreat was taken by the enemy as fleeing. Though the uncle advised his nephew to stop and not to pursue the Sikhs, the nephew insisted on chasing the fleeing Sikhs. But after the Sikhs had gone a few miles, they turned round and fell upon him and his uncle like hungry lions. The Sikhs' swords then worked like machines. The arrogant Shamas Khan was killed in the midst of the battle, whereas Bazid Khan was seriously wounded. The other men chasing them were also cut to pieces, but those who survived were soon joined by others who were coming behind from Raipur. But the Sikhs again goaded their horses and in the twinkling of an eye vacated the field. Wazid Khan's son (Shabad) could only carry the bodies of Shamas Khan and the dying Bazid Khan, who died a couple of days later at Raipur as a result of his serious wounds.³⁶ The entire camp equipage of the *Faujdar* of Jammu and Shamas Khan fell into the hands of the *Khalsa* who overran the towns of Raipur and Bahrampur and advanced upon the *parganas* of Kalanaur and Batala.

On receipt of the information of the arrival of the Sikhs in the neighbourhood, many of the inhabitants of these places deserted their homes and fled to Lahore and other places of safety with their families and such property as they could carry. The victory at Raipur-Bahrampur in November 1711, A.D., had greatly encouraged the Sikhs. They pillaged the whole territory of Kalanaur, Batala and Achal. These well-known towns which enjoyed special importance in the Mughal times were known to be the repositories of wealth throughout that part of the province. So the *Khalsa* army had a good amount of booty from these places.

Next Banda Singh Bahadur wanted to advance upon Lahore but since he was being pursued by the imperial generals at close quarters and the Emperor himself being not far off, he crossed the Ravi into the Rachna Doab and went towards the hills of Jammu. According to Dr. Ganda Singh, "Mohammad Amin Khan, Aghar Khan and Rustamdil Khan now combined their troops together and encircled Banda Singh from three sides. But his genius extricated him without any loss." Giving them a slip, Banda Singh suddenly appeared from the opposite direction, near Parol and Kathua, and fell upon the troops of Rustamdil Khan.

Cutting through the enemy lines, he, accompanied by the Singhs, escaped unhurt into the difficult defile of craggy mountains and Rustamdil was unable to pursue him. Dejected at his reverses Rustamdil Khan poured his anger upon the inhabitants of Parol and Kathua. He committed terrible atrocities on the people and captured youngmen and women and brought them to Lahore for sale in the horse market (*Nakhkhas*).³⁷

Soon afterwards, some differences, resulting in a serious quarrel, arose between the two commanders, Muhammad Amin Khan and Rustamdil Khan, and as Amin Khan succeeded in poisoning the Emperor's impressionable mind against Rustamdil Khan, he (Rustamdil Khan) left the expeditionary force in disgust and returned to Lahore. The Emperor got annoyed and ordered that he be produced before him. He was brought at night and the Emperor ordered that he be imprisoned with fetters on his feet and his property be confiscated. Muhammad Amin Khan, however, continued his stay in the hills in connection with the pursuit of the Sikhs, though evidently, without much success.

The Sikhs of Lahore and its neighbourhood were passing through hard times in those days. The Mughal oppression and tyranny heaped upon them were of the extreme type. There was a general order to kill the Sikhs wherever they were found. Anyone suspected of being a Sikh or being friendly with a Sikh, was put to death without much ado. The order was carried out most indiscriminately and many people were murdered and persecuted on the charge of being Sikhs or their supporters and sympathisers. They even objected to the religious worship of the Hindus, resulting in the murder of a poor Avadhuta woman. It was almost impossible for the Hindus to live in Lahore. The entire Hindu population in Lahore was thoroughly terrorised by such acts. This was followed by a more serious mishap.³⁸

One day, the relations of the Khan-i-Khanan's Hindu *Mutasaddi*, Shiv Singh, whose son was suffering from smallpox, were going for worship, singing and beating a drum, to the temple of Seetla Devi, the goddess of smallpox. On this the *Maulavis* or *Mullas* of Lahore raised a religious cry, complaining that *Kufar* or heresy was gaining ground in the city. A hundred thousand Muslim fanatics, mostly shoemakers and vegetable-sellers, responded to the call and under the leadership of one Viridi Beg, backed by the *Mullas*, subjected the defenceless Hindus to an indiscriminate plunder. The whole of Lahore was shocked to see this fanaticism and cruelty. But for the timely help of Bachan Singh

Kachhwaha and Badan Singh Bundela, who had been deputed by the Emperor for the protection of the city, most of the Hindu population would, perhaps, have perished. At this critical juncture these two officials occupied a safe position outside the city and by beat of drum, called the Hindus out into their protection. Zabardast Khan now realized the graveness of the situation and, on his advice, Aslam Khan, the Governor of Lahore, put an end to this unpleasant affair.³⁹

The imperial camp was at this time on its way to Lahore. Quite contrary to what the truth was, those idiotic fanatics, steeped in ignorance, "complained to the Emperor that they had suffered very heavily at the hands of the Hindus and the Sikhs in the last riot". It was also suggested to the Emperor by some interested people that the Sikhs in the guise of the Hindus, were at the bottom of all this trouble. The Emperor asked them about the difference between the Hindus and the Sikhs. He was told that the Hindus shaved their heads and chin but the Sikhs never did that. Emperor issued a royal proclamation that it was compulsory for the Hindus to shave their heads and beards and any Hindu disobeying the order, was to be punished as a Sikh. The government officers in the city took the barbar with them and whoever met them with a beard on, was shaved without fail. Royal princes, *Mutsaddis* and other well-known Hindus, shaved off their beards in their own houses before they came into the royal presence. This practice went on from day-to-day until the royal camp arrived in the neighbourhood of Lahore and orders for preparations for the coronation day celebrations were issued.⁴⁰

Emperor Bahadur Shah, as we know, arrived at Lahore on August 11, 1711, A.D. He did not reside in the fort. Instead, he pitched a camp near the village of Anwala, near the bank of the river Ravi. In January 1712, A.D., the Emperor fell ill and his health started deteriorating. He could not even appear for the annual celebrations of his coronation. His condition deteriorated further in another month. He ordered the dogs and the donkeys in the city to be killed. Another royal order demanded the *yogis*, ascetics and *fakirs* to be turned out of the city. The Emperor held his last Durbar on February 24, 1712, A.D. The next day he was reported to be very seriously ill. A great excitement and commotion prevailed among the Princes and Amirs during the three days of his illness. During the night between February 27 and 28, 1712, A.D., Monday, the Emperor breathed his last.⁴¹

Thus we see that Bahadur Shah's attempt to quell the Sikh uprising led by Banda Singh Bahadur had come to a naught in spite of his best efforts. The Hindus and the Sikhs had joined hands to make it a grand success. The bewildered Emperor was finding no way out to disunite them as his efforts to browbeat the Sikhs by imposing *Jazia* at the double rate had also failed to produce the desired effect. Likewise, shaving of beards of the Hindus also had no effect on the Sikh movement as such. So other punitive steps were taken. On May 29, 1711, A.D., "an order was issued that in future the *jazia* should be realised at the increased rate from the Hindus also."⁴² Raja Jagat Singh of Srinagar-Garhwal took stern action against the Sikhs residing in his area as evidenced by his act of sending twenty-five chopped off heads of the Sikhs to the Emperor at his camp in the vicinity of Rahon.⁴³ Banda Singh Bahadur frustrated the efforts of the imperialists in the hills of Jammu whose topography he knew as a young boy.

The Emperor was trying his level best to reinforce the forces of the generals engaged in fighting Banda Singh Bahadur by issuing instructions immediately on the receipt of the whereabouts of Banda Singh Bahadur and his men. To keep the high spirits from sagging further, the Emperor continued to order them either to hold Banda Singh Bahadur captive or murder him. But it is to the credit of this brave fighter for the liberation of the people that, by his bold planning and daring fighting, he brought every effort of the imperialists to naught. Banda Singh Bahadur was a man of war and his followers were soldiers in the spirit of the word. Both made an excellent combination to frustrate their enemies. The hope of getting proprietary rights on the land and booty, attracted the sturdy peasantry to his standards in ever-increasing numbers, which enabled him to carry on his fight against the imperialists in spite of the heavy odds against him. Commenting on this aspects, Fauja Singh has rightly said that his "general promise at the very outset of his campaigns to distribute the conquered lands among those who would fight for him, and his land reforms after the conquest of Sarhind, conferring proprietorship upon petty cultivators in place of *Zamindars* or *Chaudhries*, popularised his cause and made him the rallying point of the poor agricultural classes, thereby broadening the base of his struggle. As a result of this, he was able to mobilise a huge mass of people for the execution of his grandiose plans".⁴⁴ Enraged at the continued support of the common people to the cause of Banda Singh Bahadur, his opponents "committed great excesses" as was done against the inhabitants of Kathua by Rustamdil Khan, "by seizing many persons with the wrongful accusation of being Sikhs and giving them to

his soldiers in lieu of pay. These latter sold the poor wretches in the horse market (*nakhkhas*) at Lahore".⁴⁵ As discussed earlier, the imposition of *jazia* on the Hindus and the Sikhs of Subah Delhi at double the rate did not deter the common people from joining his standards. At times, Banda Singh Bahadur took full advantage of the conflicts of the party politics at the Mughal court as it happened at the time of the mutual differences between Rustamdil Khan and Muhammad Amin Khan. By then, Banda Singh Bahadur had been driven towards Jammu but on Rustamdil Khan's dismissal he got a respite and returned to the plains to carry out his plan. In this mutual suspicion, Muhammad Amin Khan had alleged that Rustamdil Khan had accepted a handsome amount as bribe from Banda Singh Bahadur and accordingly he let him go unpunished. The complaint had been upheld by the Emperor resulting in dismissal of Rustamdil Khan and putting him into the prison. If it is true that Banda Singh Bahadur greased the palm of such a high imperial officer, then no hope was left of success of imperial efforts against him.

Banda Singh Bahadur continued to receive support of the people of the area in spite of the stern measures employed by the imperialists. Some people took full advantage of the greed of the imperial officials who indulged in selling provisions from the military establishments. On October 27, 1711, A.D., this report of corruption was brought to the notice of the Emperor who deputed the *daroga* of the *topkhana* to investigate. It was also reported that "some people purchased horses and ammunition to be delivered to the rebels and they carried the same by way of Kohistan. If somebody obstructed them, they pretended that they were taking the same for the *Zamindars* of the district". The Emperor ordered that investigations should be conducted in this regard.⁴⁶ The same day another report was submitted to the Emperor that stated: "The Hindu *Fakirs*, *Yogis*, *Sanyasis* and *Bairagis* conveyed the imperial news to the rebel Guru. The Emperor ordered that if that was proved in any case the alleged informer be murdered. He further ordered that Surbarah Khan Kotwal should turn out the Hindu *Faqirs* from the imperial camp."⁴⁷ These royal orders and court reports reveal that in spite of concerted efforts of the imperialists, Banda Singh Bahadur kept on his efforts to harass them and also continued to receive help from different sections of society. He very cleverly planted his men in the royal camp who kept him informed about the moves of the Emperor against him. Simultaneously, he was able to secure war material from the garrisons of the Mughals by means of bribing the concerned officials.

So Banda Singh Bahadur gave a good account of gurriella warfare in the face of adverse circumstances created by well-equipped hordes of enemy forces. The Emperor had been kept fully informed about the day-to-day activities of the rebels and the action taken by the imperial officers engaged in the action against Banda Singh Bahadur and his men. Here, it would not be out of place to reproduce a news report which throws ample light on the history of the Sikhs in general and the role of Ajit Singh in it in particular. The report reads: "Ajit Singh (adopted) son of Guru Gobind Singh, who was staying with Sarbarah Khan, came to the Emperor and made an offering of nine ashrafis. The Emperor ordered that he could live wherever he pleased and he should keep association with Mahabat Khan Bahadur. Chak Guru (Amritsar) was conferred on Ajit Singh."⁴⁸

The contents of the report made it explicitly clear that the Emperor by conferring Amritsar on Ajit Singh, tried to sow the seeds of dissension among the Sikhs so as to weaken their struggle against the Emperor. But, due to the sterling qualities of leadership, Banda Singh Bahadur defied all his attempts in this direction. After the retreat of Raja Jai Singh and Raja Ajit Singh from Sadhaura and demise of the Emperor Bahadur Shah on February 28, 1712 A.D., Banda Singh Bahadur got ample opportunity to recapture Sadhaura and Lohgarh (Mukhlispur). This goes to the credit of inspiring leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur that he kept the *Khalsa* united and defied the mighty Mughal armies during the life time of Bahadur Shah. Banda Singh Bahadur's endeavour to liberate the toiling masses from the clutches of their tyrant Mughal officers had so much endeared him among the common people that they again flocked under his banner. When the sons of Bahadur Shah were busy in deciding the claimant to the throne on the banks of Ravi at Lahore, Muhammad Amin Khan also left his mission of chastisement of Banda Singh Bahadur unfinished and went to Lahore. Banda Singh Bahadur took full advantage of the situation.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Irvine, William, *The Later Mughals*, p. 104.
2. Taj-Din Diwan Buotat, Hafiz Khan Diwan, Hasan Riza Kotwal, Fakhar-ud-din Bakshi, Muhammad Tahir and Darwesh Muhammad Qazi. These names from *Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi* are quoted by Gokul Chand Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
3. Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

4. When Bahadur Shah was marching into the Deccan against his brother Kam Bakhsh, Raja Jai Singh Kachhwaha and Ajit Singh Rathor had escaped from his camp near Mandeshwar on April 30, 1708, A.D., and had entered into an alliance with Raja Amar Singh of Udaipur to resist the Mughal authorities in Rajputana. The imperial forces sustained heavy losses in the bloody conflicts that followed and the Emperor was made to realise the necessity of adopting conciliatory measures to pacify the disturbances in the neighbourhood of the capital at a time when greater portion of the imperial forces was employed in far south. On his return from the expedition he thought of availing himself of the opportunity to reduce these insurrectionary chiefs. With this object in view, he marched into Rajputana and, on May 15, 1710, A.D., his army was encamped at Dandwa Serai on the banks of the Banas, 30 kos from Ajmer. The negotiations began and the letters of the "chiefmen" of the Rajas were presented on the 22nd. On May 26, the imperial camp and the army reached Toda. It was in these days that the gravity of the rebellion of the Sikhs in the Punjab was brought to the Emperor on May 30, 1710, A.D.
5. S.S. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
6. Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
7. *Akhbarat*, May 23, 1710 A.D.
8. *Ibid.*, September 21, 1710 A.D.
9. Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
10. *Ibid.*
11. In July 1710 A.D., the Emperor appointed Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan the Governor of Sarhind. See Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
12. Isa Khan Manj was an important personality in the Doab. His grandfather, Bulaqi, had been a notorious dacoit, who had terrorised the whole of the Doaba. Isa Khan proved to be a worse beast. He had taken to robbing the caravans on the highways in place of raiding small places. He had, at the same time, developed intimate relations with the local rulers. He, thus, played safe, escaped punishment for his crime, and was taken for one of the richest persons in the region. When the Sikh revolution began, he moved into Sultanpur under protection of Shamas Khan who asked him later to look after the Doaba region during his absence in Sarhind. He was next appointed the commissioner of the Doaba by imperial orders. Isa Khan inflicted the most terrible cruelties on the Sikhs who had then returned to the Doaba. He put to the sword every solitary Sikh who was caught moving in the area.
13. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
14. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
15. Irvine, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 111.
16. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II, pp. 669-70, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, pp. 423-24.
17. Kanwar Khan, quoted by Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

18. Quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
19. Khafi Khan, Vol. II, pp. 671-72. Quoted by H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
20. Khafi Khan, in Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 424.
21. The Rajas of Srinagar and Nahan, particularly the latter, have generally been styled by the Muhammadan writers *Barfi Raja* or icy kings. They were so-called because of their territories being in the ice-clad mountains, or because the Raja of Nahan used to send boat-loads of ice or *barf* as presents to the Emperor and nobles of Delhi—from *Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shah-Nadir-us-Zamani*, quoted by Irvine, William, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 117.
22. Kanwar Khan, quoted by Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22
23. Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 424.
24. *Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan*, in Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 555-56.
25. At about this time Muhammad Khan came from Sarhind and presented to the Emperor six cartloads of Sikh heads.
26. Kettle (symbol of the means to feed the poor), sword (symbol of power to protect the weak and helpless), victory and unhesitating patronage have been obtained from Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh.
27. One God! Victory to the sect.
The new war cry introduced by Banda Singh. Later, as it was feared to be used for and replace the old Sikh salutation, it was rejected by the *Khalsa* in favour of *Wahiguruji Ki Fateh*.
28. These words are used for the Guru in whose name he issued the letter. Some writers have misconstrued that he had used these words for himself and that he had tried to pose himself as Guru. But this does not stand the test of historical evidence. Here, in this document, the personality of the Guru is mentioned distinct from his own. He clearly enjoins that the Guru and not himself, is the saviour of the *Khalsa*.
29. There is no injunction for or against the use of meat, fish, onion in the teachings of the Sikh religion. It is left to individual choice. Banda Singh's injunction against their use betrays the predominance of his old *Bairagi* vegetarianism over his mind in respect of food. Although the majority of the Sikhs are meat-eaters, there is no religious injunction for or against it.
30. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Deol, G.S., *op. cit.*, p. 78.
34. Mohammad Harisi, *Ibrat Namah*, p. 43. a. quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
35. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

36. Their bodies were removed to Kasur and buried there. This is quoted by Ganda Singh from *Ibrat Namah of Harisi, op. cit.*, p. 135.
37. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 23, Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 138. G.S. Deol, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
38. See Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

"For a long time past some *Sannyasis* and *Bairagis* had a monastery of theirs near the imperial palace on the bank of the Ravi, where they practised religious austerity and devoted themselves to meditation. An Avadhuta woman from amongst the *Sannyasis* was absorbed in her meditation when some ungentlemanly, Muslims, out of bigotry, thrust a dagger into her heart and broke her skull . . . blood gushed out of the wound like water from a spring. The Hindus and Muhammadans present on this occasion were filled with sorrow, but on account of their partiality for Islam, none could move his tongue." Quoted from *Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi*, 223 b.
39. *Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi*, 223 b-224 b. Quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
40. See Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Also see G.S. Deol, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
41. His corpse was prepared for burial and laid in a coffin by *Maulvi* Murad Ullah Mahfuz Khan and Abdul Qadir, but it lay unburied until the question of the successor to the throne had been decided. It was despatched to Delhi on April 11, 1712, A.D., in the charge of Bibi Mehar Parwar, the Emperor's widow and of Chin Qilich Muhammad Khan. It arrived at Delhi on the May 15, 1712, A.D., when it was buried in the courtyard of the marble mosque erected by Aurangzeb near the shrine of Khwajah Qutab-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki.
42. *Akhbarat*, dated May 29, 1711 A.D., quoted by Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
43. *Ibid.*, dated May 30, 1711 A.D.
44. Fauja Singh, *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, April 1982, p. 382.
45. William Irvine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 119.
46. *Akhbarat*, dated October 28, 1711 A.D.
47. *Ibid.*, dated October 28, 1711 A.D.
48. *Ibid.*, dated December 30, 1711 A.D.

The Struggle against Jahandar Shah

The death of Bahadur Shah was followed by the usual struggle among his four sons for the throne. In the civil war which occurred at Lahore on March 14 to 17, 1712, A.D., prince Azim-us-Shan lost his life as a result of his elephant being wounded and throwing him into the river Ravi. Jahandar Shah, the eldest son of Bahadur Shah, killed his remaining two brothers (Jahan Shah and Rafi-us-Shan) in the battle which was fought on March 27 to 28, 1712, A.D., ultimately, Jahandar Shah ascended the throne on March 29, 1712, A.D. His reign began with a series of executions and imprisonments, but it did not last long. Ten months later, he himself was defeated by Farrukh Siyar, son of Azim-us-Shan. With the help of Sayyed brothers, Hussain Ali and Abdulla, Farrukh Siyar put his uncle (Jahandar Shah) to death on February 11, 1713, A.D., to avenge the death of his father and he himself ascended the throne of Delhi.

On the death of Bahadur Shah, Muhammad Amin Khan returned to Lahore to take part in the struggle for succession, and the *Khalsa* emerged from their retreats to establish once again their lost power. Banda Singh Bahadur availed himself of the opportunity and occupied Sadhaura without any loss of time in early February 1712, A.D. The short period in which he came and conquered Sadhaura is simply astounding. Commenting on this, Ganda Singh writes: "The agility with which he moved in the craggy mountains, appears to have been wonderful; from

the vicinity of Jammu he managed to reach Sadhaura in a marvellously short time."¹

After capturing Sadhaura, Banda Singh Bahadur went to Lohgarh and got it repaired, and once again it became his residence or headquarter.² He once again mustered his Sikh veterans under his banner and strongly fortified Sadhaura and Lohgarh. Taking full advantage of the confusion created due to the war of succession, Banda Singh Bahadur employed his men to restore the previously enjoyed dignity of Lohgarh. Many of the hill states were reduced to subjugation and their rulers paid tributes into the Sikh treasury.³ Banda Singh Bahadur made elaborate preparations for resistance against the imperial forces by strongly garrisoning Sadhaura and Lohgarh. From the first ridge up to the wall of Lohgarh itself, they had built fifty-two defensive posts, arranged in such a manner that each protected the other, thus exposing an assailant to a deadly fire throughout his advance. Adequate arrangement was made for storing ammunition and foodgrains and other necessities at Sadhaura and Lohgarh. He also rehearsed guerilla warfare to be waged against the imperial army.

Jahandar Shah became the Emperor at Lahore by murdering his brothers and, like other officers, Muhammad Amin Khan Chin also waited upon him for soliciting his posting orders. Describing the meeting, official news writer wrote on March 20, 1712, A.D., that Muhammad Amin Khan Bahadur had gone for the punishment of the rebel Guru (Banda Singh Bahadur). During this time he came to the Emperor and paid his respects to him and made an offering of one thousand *mohars* and one thousand rupees. Special *khilats* were conferred on him and his four companions.⁴ He was again drafted to punish the rebel Sikhs. For this purpose the Emperor issued orders on March 29, 1712, A.D. According to this, "nine thousand troopers under the command of Muhammad Amin Khan Bahadur were drafted for the punishment of the rebel Guru (Banda Singh Bahadur)".⁵ But he did not proceed immediately as is clear from another news report dated April 5, 1712, A.D. On this day the Emperor called him in his prayer room, "awarded a special *khilat* along with a turban, decorated sword and an increase in his rank. He was wished well for his proposed campaign at the head of ten thousand *sawars*" against Banda Singh Bahadur.⁶ He did not proceed immediately: perhaps he wanted his rank to be increased and he requested the Emperor and his wish was granted as is evident from the above quoted news report. Emperor Jahandar Shah made him head of ten thousand *sawars*, as against the earlier order of nine

thousand *sawars*. But it seems that still Muhammad Amin Khan was not satisfied with the number of soldiers and horses made available to him and he again requested Jahandar Shah for granting him more men and horses. This also made clear that Sikh rebellion was a very serious rebellion which could not be crushed with meagre resources.

So Mohammad Amin Khan made preparations to send Muaraf Khan as a leader of the vanguard on April 9, 1712, A.D. It seems that Jahandar Shah was very eager to control the Sikh rebellion as is evident from his anxiety in the matter. When preparations were on for starting on his journey to Delhi, he kept on ordering early despatch of imperial forces against the rebels. On April 12, 1712, A.D., the Emperor ordered that Raja Mohkam Singh along with his son be posted to the army of Muhammad Amin Khan. Muaraf Khan and Mohkam Singh were ordered to depart for stations of their posting. They were given the ranks of five thousand *Zat* and four thousand *sawar* each. Seeing the gravity of the situation and seriousness of the rebellion, on April 23, 1712 A.D. "the Emperor ordered that one thousand and five hundred horsemen at an average monthly salary of twenty-five rupees, according to the prevalent practice, and two thousand foot soldiers at the average monthly pay of four rupees per mensem, be deputed to join him (Amin Khan)".⁷ Thus every available man of the imperial army who could be spared from Delhi, and the troops of the province of Lahore were placed at his disposal.

Jahandar Shah reached Sarhind on May 20, 1712, A.D., where a deputation of the people of the *Chakla* of Sarhind waited upon him and requested to provide them security against Banda Singh Bahadur's men. They said: "When the Emperor would return to Akbarabad, the rebels (Sikhs) would wander about in the district of Sarhind. Thus there would be no security for the people there. If due care was paid to them they would show firmness in staying on, otherwise they would like to move away from that place along with his Majesty. The Emperor told them that they should rest assured that due attention would be paid to their security."⁸ The same type of complaint was lodged by the people of Thanesar on May 29, 1712, A.D., when the Emperor reached the town. They told him that when Banda Singh Bahadur was "plundering their habitations, most of the vagabonds who had joined the Nanak worshippers supplied all sorts of provisions to the rebels. They gave trouble to most of the Muslims".⁹ Here it is worth noting that common people were helping Banda Singh Bahadur in his fight against the imperialists and they did not give trouble to all the Muslims but punished only those Muslims who sided with the imperialists. The

imperialists gave an exaggerated account of the activities of the rebels. But these tales of woes of the people infuriated the Emperor who ordered his attendant Rai Manu to go to the town of Thanesar accompanied by Sarabarah Khan Kotwal along with a contingent to capture all those people who had declared themselves to be the Sikhs. Seventeen persons were arrested and punished. The Emperor assured the people of Thanesar that Imadat-ul-Mulk would shortly send his forces and make the remaining rebels captive. Then the Emperor marched on his journey to Delhi and Agra. He reached Narela on June 7, 1712, A.D., and issued an order that the Emperor "would enter the fort of the capital (Lal Quila) and would sit on the throne on the 10th of June, 1712 A.D".¹⁰ On June 10, 1712, A.D., a new coin was given currency and the Emperor sat on the throne in the *Diwan-i-Khas* of Red Fort. On this auspicious occasion it was brought to the notice of the Emperor that the rebel Guru (Banda Singh Bahadur) had set up his *thana* in the neighbourhood of Chhatta Ambala. But the *Faujdar* and the *Zamindars* got together and the *thana* of the rebel leader was removed.¹¹ Alarmed at the news about the audacity of Banda Singh Bahadur, Jahandar Shah took steps to mobilise the support of the rulers of the hills. He sent *Khilats* and *farman* to Jagat Chand, the ruler of Kumaon, ordering him to punish Banda Singh Bahadur.¹² He set Bhup Prakash, the ruler of Nahan, free and gave him *Khilat*¹³ and gave *diwani* of the army of Muhammad Amin Khan to Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan, *Faujdar* of Sarhind. An addition was also made in his mansabdari rank. His nephew named Abu-ul-Qasim was appointed to deputyship of the *Faujdar* of Sarhind and he was given a rank of four hundred.¹⁴ He sent Isa Khan and Muhammad Daulat Khan to reinforce Muhammad Amin Khan Bahadur so that they could punish the rebels.¹⁵ He also ordered Jagat Chand, the ruler of Kumaon (Garhwal), to march against Banda Singh Bahadur, and the ruler of Srinagar (Garhwal) to collaborate with one another.¹⁶ Thus, Jahandar Shah took every possible step to bring under control the situation created by Banda Singh Bahadur and his associates.¹⁷

Mohammad Amin Khan and Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan (*Faujdar* of Sarhind) arrived in the vicinity of Sadhaura taking along with a large army. Both these generals threw a siege around Sadhaura. For several months the two commanders maintained a close watch on Sadhaura and the fort of Lohgarh but, in spite of all efforts, they failed to make any effect upon the besieged. The *Khalsa* stood fast their ground and repulsed the repeated attacks of the imperial forces. Banda Singh Bahadur was a soldier of the first rank who faced the mighty Mughal imperial force for many months with a handful of his warriors. He sent out his three or

four divisions from the fort of Sadhaura to attack by surprise, unexpectedly at different times and at different places daily. As soon as the imperial troops tried to advance towards Sadhaura or Lohgarh, they raised alarm and the Sikhs came out from all directions and fell upon the Mughals. These sorties met with success against the Mughals and kept them at bay.¹⁸

When the war of succession was going on between Jahandar Shah and his three brothers at Lahore, taking advantage of the situation, the *Khalsa* constructed a stone and brick fort at Sadhaura, from where they offered a stout resistance to the imperial forces and maintained their position in spite of all the efforts of Amin Khan and Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan. Muhammad Amin Khan constructed an earthen fortress (*Kachi Garhi*) on the otherside of Sadhaura where Banda Singh Bahadur had constructed a *pucca garhi* (fortress built with stone and bricks) at about a distance of one *kos*. Reporting this, Muhammad Amin Khan wrote to the Emperor that Banda Singh Bahadur was staying there in his *pucca garhi*. "He came out every day. The imperial troopers engaged the Sikhs in a skirmish. He had come out of the hills on the 17th of August, 1712 A.D. The Mughal forces reached there and engaged in fighting with small weapons. Many rebels were killed and many of the royal soldiers also died or were injured."¹⁹ It seems that Muhammad Amin tried to hide his failure to capture Banda Singh Bahadur or his fortresses, and lamented the inadequacy of arms and men at his command. He continued to write: "For want of more men the Mughal personnel were very much in trouble."²⁰ In the same way, he again wrote that he "was hoping to be reinforced with two big guns for the punishment of the rebel Guru (Banda Singh Bahadur). His request was accepted."²¹ The Emperor ordered Shujah Ali Khan Bahadur, *Darogha-i-Topkhana*, to provide the needed guns to Muhammad Amin Khan. On the other front, Bhup Prakash, the ruler of Nahan, wrote to Khan Firoz Jung that the forces of Banda Singh Bahadur had entered his district. He sent his contingents against the Sikhs and fighting took place. Many of the rebels were killed. According to the estimate of the Nahan ruler, Banda Singh Bahadur "intended to go towards the hills. A horde was sent to gear up the *Zamindar*."²² But this could not deter Banda Singh Bahadur from starting new troubles in other areas.

Banda Singh Bahadur wanted to divert the attention of the imperial forces by enlarging the sphere of his activities. So, he sent a few Sikhs to invade the town of Chhat Sarkar which was being protected by Abu-ud-Qasim, the deputy of Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan. Abu-ud-Qasim ran

away without facing the *Khalsa*. He left the town at the mercy of God. "This emboldened the Sikhs who collected material resources for carrying on their fight from other *parganas* of the *Chakla* of Sarhind and the agents of the *Faujdar* were incapable of punishing the rebels." Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan, who was with Muhammad Amin Khan at Sadhaura, also "failed to take speedy action. Thus, all the *Chaklas* of Sarhind were ruined and the rebels had set up their *thanas* at many places".²³ This report throws ample light on the helplessness of the imperial forces against the followers of Banda Singh Bahadur, who had risen to a man to get their rights from the ruling class. When some area went under the control of the men of Banda Singh Bahadur, who fully protected the life and property of the people by establishing police posts, it was described by the imperialists as "ruined".

Thus, to suppress the Sikh rebellion under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, Jahandar Shah employed mighty forces under able royal generals like Amin Khan and Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan. It is true that due to fear of rebellion on the part of his nephew Farrukh Siyar, who was at Patna at that time, Jahandar Shah himself could not come to crush the Sikh rebellion, but he had taken adequate steps to quell the Sikh revolt. In fact, no Mughal Emperor could ever tolerate that anyone should cause disorder and confusion in any part of the Empire. The general belief about Jahandar Shah is that he did not try to establish administrative control on his Empire. It may be true but, at least in the case of Punjab, he took strong measures to quell the Sikh rising and never delayed supply of additional forces and artillery to reinforce Muhammad Amin Khan. Even when he was at Lahore, he had re-appointed Muhammad Amin Khan Chin to chastise Banda Singh Bahadur by taking ten thousand *sawars*. Subsequently, Raja Mohkam Singh and his son were drafted to join Amin Khan along with their armies. On April 23, 1712, A.D., permission was given to him to recruit one thousand and five hundred *Sawars* and two thousand foot soldiers. On May 22, 1712, A.D., when Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan, *Faujdar* of Sarhind, waited upon the Emperor, he was ordered that eight thousand fresh horsemen be deployed to kill Banda Singh Bahadur and then capture Sadhaura and Lohgarh. On May 29, 1712, A.D., he issued orders to Imadat-ul-Mulk to send his forces to punish the followers of Banda Singh Bahadur. Taking these evidences into account, one can easily guess the state of mind of Jahandar Shah who never underestimated the power of the Sikhs under Banda Singh Bahadur.

In spite of all the efforts of the imperial forces, the siege continued for several months. They launched a series of attacks, but each time they were beaten back by the *Khalsa*, who stood fast at their positions and the Mughal forces failed to affect the besieged *Khalsa*. At last, towards the end of the year 1712 A.D., when Jahandar Shah moved towards Akbarabad (Agra) to oppose the advance of Farrukh Siyar, Muhammad Amin Khan was recalled to join the imperial camp, but Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan had been left there to continue the siege to the best of his ability.²⁴ But Zain-ud-din-Ahmad Khan could not accomplish anything. Banda Singh Bahadur and the *Khalsa*, at this time, had a little respite, but the *Khalsa* did not waste this time in idleness. During this period Banda Singh Bahadur and the *Khalsa* took the opportunity to strengthen the Sadhaura fort which was constructed a few months ago. Commenting upon the spirit of the Sikhs, Ganda Singh writes: "The fighting spirit and the power of resistance of the Sikh garrison in the fort of Sadhaura was simply wonderful. They would continue their fire upon the enemy even while they were cooking and eating, unmindful of the inclemency of weather."²⁵

Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan thought that in this way they would not be able to conquer the Sikhs. Finding that his cannon-balls made no impression on the fort walls, he advanced his trenches within forty or fifty yards of the fort. Here he formed a battery, placed a heavy siege-gun in position, and opened incessant fire upon the Sikhs. Though this fire had no effect on the Sikhs, Banda Singh and his comrades resolved that the gun should be stealthily removed from that place. The *Khalsa* dug out a subterranean passage exactly opposite the position where the cannon stood, leaving only a foot or two of earth at the outer end. The oxen and ropes used in dragging their carts were held in readiness. On a dark, rainy night, when nothing could be seen or heard on account of heavy rain, the besiegers dared not put their heads outside the tents. The Sikhs found the opportunity to drag the cannon in. At midnight they pierced through the remaining wall of earth and ranged yokes of bullocks, one before the other, in the dugout passage. Then a few Sikhs, swam across the moat of the fort, in which the water was rushing down with great force and reached the besieger's earthen battery. They tied their ropes firmly to the gun-carriage and crossed back in the same manner to their own safe position. The bullocks then began to pull. The cannon with its carriage was set in motion and rolled down towards the underground passage. But, unfortunately, on reaching the bottom, the ropes tied to them broke off and the gun and carriage fell apart, causing a loud noise which roused the sleepy sentinels. The disappearance of the cannon caused a confusion in the besiegers' camp, and they ran in all directions to search for the gun. Through the mud and mire, Zain-ud-din soon

arrived on the spot in a confused state. He was on foot and without a torch, the water in some places coming up to his waist, and a heavy shower of rain pouring from above. He could not order the torches to be lighted as they would expose him to the fire of the Sikhs and without light nothing could be seen. However, after much search it was found that the cannon and its carriage were lying upside down in the ditch at the foot of the earthwork. Zain-ud-din now collected his senses and offered rewards of fifty rupees each to over hundred camp-followers if they would recover the cannon. And it was with much difficulty that they dragged it out and removed it to a place of safety.²⁶ After this incident Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan kept strict vigilance on the activities of the *Khalsa* and thus the siege of the fortress of Sadhaura continued for some more time. In the meantime, Farrukh Siyar emerged victorious in the contest with his uncle Jahandar Shah on December 31, 1712 A.D., and became Emperor. Farrukh Siyar in order to put more life into the expedition, made a change in the command with the change in the governorship of Lahore.

Thus Jahandar Shah never neglected the affairs of Punjab, though even when he himself was in trouble and fighting with Farrukh-Siyar, he called only Amin Khan Chin back from Sadhaura. In spite of the emergency, he left Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan at Sadhaura to continue the campaign and siege of Sadhaura because from the very beginning of his reign Jahandar Shah was very much aware of the seriousness of the Sikh rebellion under Banda Singh Bahadur and made adequate arrangements to suppress it. But Banda Singh Bahadur and his bold and stout comrades kept the imperial forces busy throughout his reign, which lasted about ten months, and nullified all efforts of the Mughal nobles to liquidate Banda Singh Bahadur.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
2. Lohgarh was the fort and headquarter of Banda Singh Bahadur but not the capital of Sikh state, established under his leadership. See chapter 3.
3. Ganda Singh, "Banda Singh Bahadur, his life and place of execution", the article published in the *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. IX-II, Patiala, October, 1975, p. 455.
4. *Akhbarat*, dated March 20, 1712 A.D.
5. *Ibid.*, dated March 29, 1712 A.D.
6. *Ibid.*, dated April 5, 1712 A.D.

7. *Ibid.*, dated April 23, 1712 A.D.
8. *Ibid.*, dated May 20, 1712 A.D.
9. *Ibid.*, dated May 29, 1712 A.D.
10. *Ibid.*, dated June 10, 1712 A.D.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, dated June 13, 1712 A.D.
13. *Ibid.*, dated July 2, 1712 A.D.
14. *Ibid.*, dated July 12, 1712 A.D.
15. *Ibid.*, dated July 15, 1712 A.D.
16. *Ibid.*, dated July 15, 1712 A.D.
17. Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
19. Akhbarat, dated September 1, 1712 A.D.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, dated September 8, 1712 A.D.
22. *Ibid.*, dated October 2, 1712 A.D.
23. *Ibid.*, dated October 15, 1712 A.D.
24. Harisi, 44a, quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
25. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
26. Irvine William, *The Later Mughals*, pp. 308-09.

Last Encounter

The struggle between Jahandar Shah and Farrukh Siyar resulted in the defeat (January 10, 1713, A.D.) and murder (February 10, 1713, A.D.) of Jahandar Shah.¹ On his accession Farrukh Siyar found that the Sikh power had been constantly rising in the Punjab for some years. When Amin Khan was requisitioned at the capital by Jahandar Shah to check Farrukh Siyar, who was advancing from Patna towards Akbarabad (Agra), leaving Zain-ud-din-Ahmad Khan to continue the siege of Sadhaura, Muhammad Amin Khan left for the capital in December 1712 A.D. During this time Banda Singh Bahadur made rapid strides in gaining power and territory in the Sarhind division. The Sikhs had established their administrative control over almost all the *chaklas* of Sarhind by setting up their *thanas* at many places, by October 15, 1712, A.D.² The followers of Banda Singh Bahadur were so bold and indomitable that they nullified all attempts of the besiegers of the fortress of Sadhaura and made every effort to further strengthen their defences and increase their stores of supplies from the eastern plain region, especially from the recently occupied territory which was not far from Delhi, the imperial capital of India. The reports of the Sikh activities were being regularly sent to the imperial capital. Farrukh Siyar realized that in the Sarhind division of the province of Delhi, the respect and fear which the imperial name used to inspire in the hearts of men, had ceased to move them due to the successes attained by Banda Singh Bahadur. Every Sikh fancied himself of importance and entertained thoughts of

shaking off constraints and of not only declaring his own independence but also promising protection to all those who defied the imperial officers. It did not take Farrukh Siyar long to make short work of the Sikhs led by Banda Singh Bahadur.

The reign of Farrukh Siyar, which began with a series of murders and a terrible famine in the country, is memorable for his cruel policy which he adopted towards the Sikhs. On the recall of Muhammad Amin Khan towards Agra, Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan had been left there to continue the campaign, but he could not accomplish anything. Farrukh Siyar, having secured himself on the throne of Delhi, directed his attention to the affairs in the *Chakla* of Sarhind. To put a new life in the campaign against the Sikhs, on February 22, 1713, A.D., Farrukh Siyar appointed Abd-us-Samad Khan Diler-i-Jang³ as the Governor of Lahore in place of Zabardast Khan, and Zakriya Khan, son of Abd-us-Samad Khan, as the *Faujdar* of Jammu. At the time of his departure, the Emperor instructed him to expel Banda Singh Bahadur from Sadhaura, or if possible to destroy him altogether. When he arrived at Sadhaura, the siege laid by Zain-ud-din Ahmed had not advanced much. Banda Singh Bahadur himself occupied the fort of Lohgarh, while his followers held Sadhaura. Finding that he could not successfully attack both the positions, Sadhaura and Lohgarh, at the same time, Abd-us-Samad Khan thought it advisable to attack them one after the other. The combined forces of Abd-us-Samad Khan, Zain-ud-din Ahmed Khan and the other Mughal commanders, like Inam Khan and Baqa Beg Khan, who had been sent by the Emperor to reinforce the new Governor and an innumerable host of local militia surrounded the fort of Sadhaura from all sides on June 28, 1713, A.D. Now, when Banda Singh Bahadur saw that the Sikhs in Sadhaura would not be able to hold out for long for want of rations, he sent out three or four divisions every other day and sometimes every day from Lohgarh for their relief. On July 2, 1713, A.D., one such detachment of the Sikhs was sent by Banda Singh to relieve the Sikhs of Sadhaura, a division of the imperial troops proceeded to obstruct their passage. In the fight that ensued, many Sikhs were done to death or wounded. From amongst the commanders of the Emperor, Baqa Beg Khan and his brother Inam Khan and several others fell dead in the field.⁴ The death of important Mughal generals like Baqa Beg Khan created a sense of fear among the imperial forces. Their officers held a counsel and decided to attack the undefended side of the fortress after elaborate preparations had been made. They prepared entrenchments near the fortress of Sadhaura and got prepared ladders with seven hundred wooden steps.⁵ But they did not dare to attack the Sikhs during the rainy season.⁶

The Sikhs held the fortress of Sadhaura tenaciously. The imperial forces tightened their siege of Sadhaura from all sides. On one side of the fortress camped Abd-us-Samad Khan, while Zain-ud-din Ahmed Khan camped on the other side. The third and fourth sides were guarded by the Mughals and the local militia. To terrorize them, Banda Singh Bahadur "sent out from Lohgarh three or four divisions to attack by surprise. . . . As soon as these troops were seen dimly in the dust they raised, the besiegers came out of all the four sides and fell vigorously upon them. These sorties met with no success and supplies also began to run short".⁷ The situation for the Sikhs besieged in the fortress of Sadhaura became very grim due to fear of exhaustion of foodstuffs and war material, and all their efforts to maintain supply line were cut off by the Mughal forces. So their already insufficient stores in the fort of Sadhaura were now soon exhausted and they were driven to the only alternative of evacuating the fort for a better position in Lohgarh. At last, in the first week of October 1713, A.D., they rushed out in force and made a determined sally upon the *Zamindari militia*. Hired levies could hardly stand against self-sacrificing warriors. It was not easy for them to oppose successfully the desperate *Khalsa* who cut through their lines and escaped without much loss.⁸ The report was submitted to the Emperor that the imperial forces emerged victorious and captured the fortress of Sadhaura. His majesty was very happy to hear the news. He rewarded the *Subedar* with a *farman* and a special *Khilat*.⁹

On the evacuation of the fort of Sadhaura, Abd-us-Samad Khan and Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan followed the Sikhs to the Fort of Lohgarh. The intelligent Banda Singh Bahadur now knew that they would not be in a position to resist the imperial force. So he decided to escape. On the arrival of his followers from Sadhaura, Banda Singh Bahadur retreated, as per his already chalked out plan, into the hills and soon disappeared beyond the reach of the imperial force. For the fear of the Sikhs turning back upon their heels and pouncing upon their pursuers, their pursuit as it seems was delayed by several days and later, when a search was made through the hill country, no trace could be found of them. The fall of Sadhaura and the escape of Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikhs were reported to the Emperor at Delhi on October 9, 1713, A.D.¹⁰ It was conveyed to the Emperor by Zakariya Khan, son of Abd-us-Samad Khan on December 13, 1713, A.D. He took 900 heads of the Sikhs after the capture of the fortress. The heads of the Sikhs were placed on the spears and exhibited in the Chandni Chowk Bazaar. The Emperor witnessed the sight. Zakariya Khan was given a *Khilat*, a *jigah* and a *banner*. Subsequently, he was awarded a drum and given an additional rank of

five hundred *Sawar* for his brilliant role against Banda Singh Bahadur. His father was also warmly received in the court and profusely rewarded and honoured, when a few months later he also arrived at Delhi in person after the termination of an expedition towards Multan, Mir Jumla was sent out to receive him in the capital. He was presented to his Majesty on March 6, 1714, A.D., receiving the usual gifts and on the March 10, 1714, A.D., he received a dress of honour (*Khilat*), head dress (*sarpech*), a jewelled sword, a horse and an elephant, and was posted to the army then proceeding to Rajputana.¹¹ Farrukh Siyar appointed Amin Beg and Rahmat Ullah, the mace-bearers of Abdul Latif Khan, *Naib Subedar* of Muradabad, to punish Banda Singh Bahadur.

The decline of the Sikh power and the official persecution of the Sikhs gave an impetus to the Muhammadans, officials and others, all over the country, to persecute them remorselessly. The oppression was felt the most in the Majha and the Riarki, where almost every Muhammadan considered it his sacred duty to add, in whatever way he could, to the miseries of the Sikhs. The *parganas* of Kalanaur, Batala and Kahnawan in the present district of Gurdaspur had, for about a century and a half, been the strongholds of Muhammadan power and the residents of these places have been second to none in their Islamic zeal.¹² Most of the people who led a wave of terror against the Sikhs, came to the village of Kiri Pathan. The Sikhs of this area, tired of Muslim tyranny, decided to resist the tyrants. Therefore, they organized themselves under the leadership of S. Jagat Singh. They fell upon the village and managed to enter the *garhi* or the fortress of the Pathan. The Pathans offered stiff resistance but were soon over-powered by the Sikhs. In the fight, Mohammad Ishaq was killed. The inhabitants of this village and other neighbouring villages, had deposited their belongings in the fortress, which fell into the hands of the Singhs. Two weeks after the occurrence of this event, Abd-us-Samad Khan and his son Zakriya Khan returned from Rajputana to Delhi on June 26, 1714, A.D. Two nobles were despatched to the Punjab with orders for the chastisement of the Sikhs. Abd-us-Samad Khan then returned to Lahore on August 26, 1714, A.D. A report was received that the Sikhs numbering 7000 had attacked Ropar. The Deputy of Zain-ud-din Ahmed Khan of Sarhind met them and organized a good defence. It is said that two hundred Sikhs were killed. The remaining, having no other alternative open to them, retreated.

Farrukh Siyar, the Emperor, pressed hard the Sikhs by appointing royal officers with adequate powers to crush the Sikh rebels after the fall of Sadhaura and Lohgarh. They chased the Sikhs out of the plains of the

Punjab. Banda Singh Bahadur escaped towards Jammu hills and chose a secluded place on the left bank of the Chenab, about two miles south-east of Bhabbar village. The place is now known as *Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur*. Here he stayed from October 1713, A.D., to February 1715, A.D., and married for the second time Bibi Sahib Kaur, the daughter of Shiv Ram Khatri of Wazirabad. A son named Ranjit Singh was born to them in due course. Sahib Kaur stayed there in seclusion when Banda Singh Bahadur came down to plains to re-engage himself in the liberation struggle against the Mughals and subsequently was put to death. Khidmat Talab Khan¹³ was about this time appointed the *Faujdar* of Sarhind in place of Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan. He employed a large force to watch the appearance of Sikhs from the hills. But as the Sikhs had lost their strong places and their stores of food and fodder in the plains, and the supporters of the Mughal cause in the country had risen up against them throughout the land, it became impossible for them to subsist. They had, therefore, no other course left but to retire to the hills.

In early March 1715, A.D., Banda Singh Bahadur collected his Sikhs from their hide-outs. They then reappeared in the plains towards Kalanaur. The news of their appearance reached the *Faujdar* of Kalanaur, Suhrab Khan, and he wasted no time and collected a large force of mercenaries, religious fanatics and levies from the *pargana* and his deputies like *Qanungo* Santokh Rai and Anokh Rai, brother of the latter. The Sikhs fell upon them as a hungry lion falls on its prey. Suhrab Khan, Santokh Rai and Anokh Rai could not stand the fierce onslaught of the Singhs and ran away in order to save their lives. Thus Kalanaur fell into the hands of the Singhs. The old and tyrannical officials of the *pargana* were removed and in their place Sikh officials were appointed. A sufficient number of horsemen and footmen were left here for the maintenance of law and order. Banda Singh Bahadur next proceeded towards Batala, passing through Achal. The *Faujdar* of Batala, Shaikh Muhammad Dayam, had made the necessary preparations. So he, accompanied by his force, came to meet Banda's force. A pitched battle was fought by the parties which lasted six hours and "there was great bloodshed on both sides". The *Zamindars* of the *pargana* of Batala could not stand the dash of the Sikhs. The prominent among the nobility of Batala were killed in the battle. Eventually, Muhammad Dayam was defeated and he fled to Bharowal. Batala and its neighbouring villages were then occupied by the Singhs. According to Ganda Singh, on the defeat of Muhammad Dayam and the capture of Batala, "most of the residents, rich and poor, forsook their homes and sought shelter in the neighbouring villages with their relatives. Many went to Lahore and

many having no place of refuge went towards the hills of Chamba and towards Dasuha."¹⁴

It was reported to the Emperor on March 14, 1715, A.D., that Banda Singh Bahadur "came along with his forces and plundered Kalanaur, Batala and Raipur. None from the *Faujdar*s and the *Zamindar*s came for chastising the rebels." At that time Abd-us-Samad Khan had gone to control the rebellion of Bhattis and Dogras. "The Emperor ordered that Bakshi-ul-Mulk Muhammad Amin Khan Bahadur should write to Abd-us-Samad Khan that wherever he might be he should come back to give condign punishment to the rebel Guru (Banda Singh Bahadur)". Farrukh Siyar was so much perturbed to learn about the ravages of the Sikhs that he requisitioned the services of Qamaruddin Khan, asking him to "lead his forces to punish the rebel Guru". The same day, i.e., March 15, 1715, A.D., the Emperor told Afrasiyab Khan that "he should get ready as his Majesty himself wanted to go against the rebels. The Emperor ordered Bakshi-ul-Mulk that Raja Odeep Singh, Raja Gopal Singh, Zafar Khan, Prithi Chand, son of Raja Duleep Singh Bundela, and also 12,450 *sawars* should accompany them. The roll of the army should be prepared". But the Emperor did never go in person to lead his forces against the Sikhs. Instead, strong contingents under the command of Abd-us-Samad Khan, Khidmat Talab Khan, *Faujdar* of Sarhind, Ahmad Khan, *Faujdar* of Gujarat, Iradatmand Khan, *Faujdar* of Amanabad, Nur Muhammad Khan, ruler of Aurangabad and Parsarur, Shaikh Muhammad Daim and Subrah Khan, Sayyid Hifz Ali Khan of *Pargana* Haibatpur Patti, Raja Pharab Bhim Singh Kamboh and Hardam, son of Raja Dharab Deo Jharotha, were pressed into service against Banda Singh Bahadur. The Emperor ordered Abd-us-Samad Khan that "the rebel leader should either be killed or captured alive".¹⁵ Emperor Farrukh Siyar sent a strong force of 20,000 troops from Delhi, under Qamar-ud-din Khan. He was joined by 5000 troops from Sarhind. All the three Turani leaders were related to one another. The mother of Qamar-ud-din and wife of Abdus Samad Khan were real sisters. Zakariya Khan, son of Abd-us-Samad Khan, was married to the sister of Qamar-ud-din. Thus the campaign became a family affair of the Turani party.

Banda Singh Bahadur was also very much aware of the exigencies of the time and, therefore, he decided to throw up a mud fortification at Kot Mirza Jan, a small village between Kalanaur and Batala. But before its defences could be complete, the combined forces of the above *Faujdar*s under the chief command of Abd-us-Samad Khan and his deputy Arif Beg fell upon the Sikhs. "Banda Singh Bahadur," says the author of the

Siyar-ul-Mutakherin, "stood his ground to the amazement of all, and in the engagement he fought so heroically that he was very near giving a complete defeat to the imperial general, for altogether vigorously pursued, he retired from post to post, like a savage of wilderness from thicket to thicket, losing endlessly his men and occasioning losses to his persuers."¹⁶ And, according to Khafi Khan, "The infidels fought so fiercely that the army of Islam was nearly overpowered and over and over again they showed the greatest daring."¹⁷ But they had no place of defence and were, therefore, forced to evacuate their positions and fall back upon Gurdaspur.¹⁸

In fact, Gurdaspur was the place where Banda Singh Bahadur retreated. The actual place was the old village of Gurdas Nangal, now a heap of ruins commonly known as *Bande wali theh*, one mile from the present village of Gurdas Nangal and about four miles from Gurdaspur.¹⁹ According to Sohan Singh, Banda took shelter here in a building and not in a fort, called the *Haveli of Bhai Duni Chand*, and this statement is also endorsed by Ganda Singh. This *Haveli* had a strong wall all around, it was spacious enough to accommodate all his men. According to Hari Ram Gupta, it accommodated only 1250 men with a small number of horses. The other Sikhs who could not be lodged therein tried to flee in all directions. They fell an easy prey to the fury of the Mughal army.²⁰ According to Khafi Khan, three or four thousand of them were massacred. They filled that extensive plain with blood as if it had been a dish.²¹ Khafi Khan further observes: "Those who escaped the sword, were sent in collars and chains to the Emperor. Abd-us-Samad sent nearly two thousand heads stuffed with hay and a thousand persons bound with iron chains under the charge of his son, Zakariya Khan, and others to the Emperor."²² Banda Singh Bahadur made every effort to strengthen his defences and collect stores of ration and ammunition. To keep the enemy at a distance from his fortification, he surrounded it by a moat filled from the neighbouring canal. He also cut the imperial canal, called the *Shahi Nahar* and other small streams flowing from below the hills and allowed the water to spread and form a quagmire round the place so that the enemy—the man or horse—could not easily come close to the enclosure.

On April 17, 1715, A.D., reports were received by Emperor Farrukh Siyar at Delhi that Abd-us-Samad Khan had followed the Sikhs to their new position at Gurdas Nangal and that the imperial *Amirs* were busy in digging trenches and raising mounds for the siege. He asked Itmad-ud-Daula to write to Abd-us-Samad Khan to kill or imprison the Sikh

chief and his followers. When Abd-us-Samad Khan and his allies arrived at Gurdas Nangal, many of the Sikhs were out in the villages for the collection of supplies. Number of them fell into the hands of the imperial force, columns of whom were scouring the country in search of them. They were brought into the camp and executed with every indignity and cruelty.²³

The *Haveli* occupied by the Sikhs was immediately surrounded and blockaded, and the besiegers kept "so watchful a guard that not a blade of grass, nor a grain of corn, could find its way in". Occasionally Abd-us-Samad Khan and his son Zakariya Khan, at the head of several thousand troopers of their own nation and the forces of their allies, attempted to storm the Sikh position, but their attempts were defeated by comparatively a handful of Sikhs who showed the greatest activity in their defence. Muhammad Qasim, the author of the *Ibrat Nama*, who was in the service of Arif Beg Khan, Deputy Governor of Lahore, and who was at this time present in these operations, writes: "The brave and daring deeds of the infernal Sikhs were wonderful. Twice or thrice every day some forty or fifty of the black faced Sikhs came out of their enclosure to gather grass for their cattle, and when the combined forces of the imperial forces went to oppose them, they (Sikhs) made an end of the Mughals with arrows, muskets and small swords and disappeared, such was the terror of the Sikhs and the fear of the sorcery of the Sikh Chief that the commanders of this army prayed that God might so ordain things that Banda (Singh) should seek his safety in his flight from the *Garhi*."²⁴ These brave deeds of the Sikhs were reported to the Emperor at Delhi on April 30, 1715, A.D.²⁵

In the meantime, reinforcements were brought by Qamaruddin Khan and line of blockade was carried to within cannonshot of the fortress. Abd-us-Samad Khan requisitioned "Top Kalan" from Lahore for battering the fortress (the so-called) of Gurdas Nangal.²⁶ Then, gradually, the work of closing in on all sides was divided. Abd-us-Samad Khan took one side, Qamaruddin Khan and Zakariya Khan received charge of one side each, and the fourth side was made over to the *Faujdar*s and *Zamindar*s. By slow degrees, they closed all the openings between each shelter and before the Sikhs were aware of it, they were surrounded as if by a wall. All attempts of the besieged to sweep the obstacles away and break through were stoutly resisted by the besiegers. As the siege prolonged, so the difficulties of the Sikhs multiplied. Abd-us-Samad Khan wanted to get an early break through in the matter. Therefore, he decided to give cash reward to the killers of the Sikhs. "He gave a reward

of rupees ten for each head with (full grown) hair brought to him. He who brought a head without hair was given five rupees. The same practice of paying cash awards for killing the Sikhs continued."²⁷ The supply line was initially maintained by the *Banjaras*. The orders of the Emperor to the local *Faujdar*s and the *Zamindar*s of the hill territories that the *Banjaras* should not be allowed to pass through their areas and if captured they should be punished, sealed their activities. They used to provide "the rebels with foodgrains, arrows and rifles".²⁸ This was a severe blow to the attempts of the Sikhs to maintain their position. At this time, a few *Zamindar*s of the hill areas cooperated with them. Madho Sen, *Zamindar* of Mandi, Man Singh, *Zamindar* of Kulu, and Hiraj Pal, *Zamindar* of Malabar, did not come to the help of Abd-us-Samad Khan for the punishment of the rebels, nor did they send their forces. However, in view of the siege dragging on interminably, they could not come into the open to support the Sikhs.

Though the Sikhs were far less in number than the opposing force, they continued fighting the battle for months together so courageously that even the enemy was wonder struck. Khafi Khan says in regard to this battle: "The infidels (Sikhs) fought so fiercely that the army of Islam was nearly overpowered and over and over again they showed the greatest daring."²⁹ Similarly, Ganda Singh is of the opinion that at one stage "Abd-us-Samad Khan had lost all hopes of success against so determined and valiant a foe (Banda Singh Bahadur)". The royal forces inflicted a heavy loss on the besieged. Khafi Khan says that even the Sikhs on several occasions showed the greatest boldness and daring and made nocturnal attacks upon the imperial forces. The siege lasted a long time. They frequently made sallies into the trenches and killed many of the besiegers.³⁰ To protect themselves and their horses and other animals, the soldiers of the imperial forces threw up an earth bank, ten to twenty yards long, before each tent and sheltered themselves behind it.

The Sikhs on several occasions showed the greatest boldness and daring to sweep the obstacles away and carried away from the besiegers camp whatever they could lay their hands on. Baba Binod Singh occasionally came out of the enclosure and carried away *Shirni* and other eatables from the *bazaars* of the besiegers camp. The whole of the camp was wonder-struck at the boldness of the aged Sikh. All efforts to capture him proved futile. If they kept vigilance in the morning, he descended upon them in the evening, and if they remained watchful in the evening, he attacked them in the afternoon, and every time he was off before they

could take any counter-step. So bold and indomitable were the Guru's followers that they impressed their adversaries with the greatest respect for their fighting qualities. Thus, the siege and struggle continued for several months and there was great loss on both sides.

Because of the blockade applied by the enemy, it became impossible for the Sikhs to bring in anything from outside. Their confinement for eight long months had exhausted their already small stock of provisions and *Khalsa* began to starve. By December, Banda Singh Bahadur's provisions ran out.³¹ The *Khalsa* would make overtures to the Muhammadan soldiers and buy from them a little grain at the rate of two or three rupees a *seer*. But this could not help them and they began to suffer the utmost extremes of hunger. A stage came when there was no food left with the Sikhs and they started eating their horses. In this connection, Macauliffe writes, "the Sikhs were reduced to such extremities that they killed for food all animals in their possession".³²

It is said that at this time a quarrel arose between Banda Singh Bahadur and Binod Singh. The difference of opinion is said to have occurred over the proposal of evacuating the enclosure and following their old tactics of cutting through the enemy's lines for a place of safety. Banda Singh Bahadur, it seems was not in favour of it, for the reasons best known to him, while Binod Singh struck to his own. Hot words were exchanged between the two and then their hands went to the hilts of their swords. But Kahan Singh, Baba Binod Singh's son, intervened and averted the bloodshed, but angry words were exchanged. It was decided that Baba Binod Singh should leave the *Haveli*, which he did.

The difference was now overcome, but there was no remedy for the distress of hunger which was increasing day-by-day, says Dr. Ganda Singh.³³ In the absence of grain, horses, asses and other animals were converted into food and eaten. The Sikhs slaughtered oxen and other animals and not having any firewood, ate the flesh raw. Many Sikhs died of dysentery and privation. When all the grass was gone, they gathered leaves from trees. When these leaves were consumed, they stripped the bark and broke off the small shoots, dried them, ground them and used them instead of flour, thus keeping the body and soul together. They also collected the bones of animals and used them in the same way. Harder days came when these resources, too, gave out, some of them went to the limit of tearing their own thighs open and eating their own flesh to keep themselves alive. There is no other example known to history when people were reduced to such horrible straits to pacify the demands of

elemental hunger. The first wife of Banda Singh Bahadur, the princess of Chamba Shushil Kaur, and their son, Ajai Singh, were also among them.³⁴ About three-and-half year old innocent child also suffered extreme hardships in the name of the Guru. In spite of all this ruination, the Sikhs did not lose heart. They aimed their rifles at the enemies and pressed their triggers, even when they were at death's door. Then their ammunition, too, finished as had their rations already. These warriors with stalwart bodies were now reduced to mere skeletons. Even then the enemy did not muster enough courage to advance to attack the besieged and hungry lions.

Despite all this, the infernal Sikh chief and his men, says Kamwar Khan, "withstood all the military force that the great Mughal Empire could muster against them for eight long months". But how long could this continue? After all, they were human beings. Their never-ending starvation and the devouring of uneatable and unconsumable things, like the flesh of hoofed animals, grass, leaves, bark and shoots of trees and dry bones of dead animals wrecked their physical system. The obnoxious smell of putrid bodies of the dead and dying men and animals made the place uninhabitable. The survivors were reduced to mere skeletons. They were all half-dead, unable to use their muskets. Their magazines were emptied of their contents and it became practically "impossible for them to offer any resistance and continue the defence any longer".³⁵

At last on Wednesday, December 17, 1715, A.D., the Sikh enclosure at Gurdas Nangal, Gurdaspur, fell into the hands of the besiegers. The remaining surviving Sikhs, had been physically very weak to continue the defence, but the imperial forces were still scared of the *Khalsa*, dared not enter the enclosure. Banda Singh Bahadur along with his remnant followers surrendered unconditionally. It is said that Abd-us-Samad Khan hoisted a flag with a proclamation, promising unconditional pardon and free rations to those who would surrender. Consequently, many surrendered, but they were slaughtered. Khafi Khan says that Banda Singh Bahadur also offered himself for surrender along with others and they all were made prisoners. This view is also endorsed by Karam Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh. This news of Banda Singh Bahadur's surrender was sent to the Emperor Farrukh Siyar at Delhi by Muhammad Amin Khan on December 22, 1715, A.D.,³⁶ at a time when he was celebrating the anniversary of his victory over Jahandar Shah. Abd-us-Samad Khan reported to the Emperor that they had achieved great victory by capturing the rebel Guru (Banda Singh Bahadur) along

with a thousand of his men, alive, and taken possession of the Sikh enclosure.³⁷ After the submission of the report, the Emperor ordered that they should celebrate the victory over the rebel Guru by beating of drums. Therefore, an elephant symbolising the auspicious victory was presented to the Emperor. He ordered that four gunny bags filled with paisas should be thrown over the elephant by way of charity.³⁸ The Jubilation of Farrukh Siyar was in keeping with the importance of the imperial victory over the Sikhs. They, under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur, had held on doggedly all the force that the Empire could bring against them during the rule of Bahadur Shah, and Jahandar Shah, and even during Farrukh Siyar's attempt. It was very rightly said by Kamwar Khan: "It was by the grace of God and not by wisdom or bravery that this came to happen. Otherwise, it is known to every one that the late Emperor Bahadur Shah, with the four royal princes and numerous high officials, had made efforts to repress this rebellion, but it was all fruitless and now that infidel of the Sikh and a few thousand of his companions have been starved into surrender."³⁹

After the surrender of the garrison, Abd-us-Samad Khan made frantic efforts to get hold of the supposed hidden treasure. When it was found nowhere, he was enraged beyond control. The Mughal officers had made over one thousand Sikhs prisoners found alive within the fortress. According to William Irvine, "of these prisoners, two or three hundred were executed by the general's order. . . . As it was known that many of the Sikhs had swallowed whatever gold coins they had, to save them from plunder, the dead bodies were ripped open and thus much wealth fell into the hands of the low camp followers and the Mughal soldiers. The rest of the prisoners were placed in fetters and kept to grace the triumphal entry into Delhi."⁴⁰ The following arms and articles were recovered from the enclosure, and later delivered to the armoury of Delhi by Zakariya Khan.

Swords	—	1000
Shields	—	278
Bows and Quivers	—	173
Matchlocks	—	180
Daggers (Jamdhar)	—	114
Long Knives (Kard)	—	217
Gold Mohars	—	23
Rupees, a little over	—	600 ⁴¹

The valuables were a few gold ornaments, 23 gold coins, and a little

over 600 rupees.⁴² The list of arms taken and money seized does not give a very exalted notion of either the military strength or of the wealth of the Sikh leader in the enclosure of Gurdas Nangal and the Sikhs who so determinedly resisted the greatest empire of the day for such a long time.

Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikh prisoners⁴³ were brought to Lahore from Gurdas Nangal. Though Banda Singh was a prisoner, the officials feared that because of his supernatural powers, he might slip away. Therefore, a Mughal officer volunteered that he should be tied to Banda on the same elephant so that if he tried to escape he would thrust a dagger into his body.⁴⁴ Fetters were put on Banda Singh's feet, a ring round his neck and also a chain over his back. He was put in an iron cage, which was chained on four sides. Instead of one, two Mughal officers were tied to him, one on each side on an elephant. With three thousand heads of the Sikhs fixed on spears, Banda Singh Bahadur and his comrades were brought to Lahore in a procession, preceded by drummers and bandsmen.

At Lahore, they were kept in the fort for some days. Zakariya Khan then thought that 200 Sikhs were too small a number to be presented to the Emperor. Thus a general order for the hunt of the Sikhs was issued by him and innocent Sikhs were arrested and their number reached about a thousand in a few days.⁴⁵ Abd-us-Samad Khan asked for permission to come to Delhi in person with his great prisoner, but he was ordered to remain and attend to the government of his province, and send Banda Singh and the other Sikh prisoners in the charge of his son Zakariya Khan and of Qamr-ud-din Khan, the son of Muhammad Amin Khan. The Sikh prisoners were then marched to Delhi by Sarhind, where they were paraded through the streets to be ridiculed by the people, who hurled abuses on them, as they passed. But the Sikhs tolerated all indignities with patience and calmness and passed through the *bazaar*, singing the sacred hymns of the Gurus.⁴⁶ By reaching Agharabad on February 25, 1716, A.D., Zakariya Khan reported it to the Emperor at Delhi. Mohammad Amin Khan was sent to make necessary arrangements for bringing Banda Singh Bahadur and his followers to Delhi in a particular fashion.

On February 27, 1716, A.D., Banda Singh Bahadur and the other Sikh prisoners were conducted, in a procession, to the city of Delhi. A graphic description based on the contemporary sources is reproduced. "The road from Agharabad to the Lahori gate of the place, a distance of several miles, was lined on both sides with troops. Banda Singh Bahadur sat in

an iron cage placed on the back of an elephant. He wore a long, heavy-skirted court dress (*Jama*) of gold brocade, the pattern on it being of pomegranate flowers and a gold-embroidered turban of fine red cotton cloth. Behind him stood, clad chain mail, withdrawn sword in hand, one of the principal Mughal officers. In front of the elephant were carried, raised on bamboo poles, the heads of the Sikh prisoners who had been executed, the long hair streaming over them like a veil. Along with these, the body of a cat was exposed at the end of a pole, meaning that, even down to four-footed animals, everything in Gurdaspur had been destroyed. Behind the Guru's (Banda Singh Bahadur) elephant followed the rest of the prisoners, seven hundred and forty in number. They were seated, two and two, on camels without Saddles. One hand of each man was attached to his neck by two pieces of wood, which were held together by iron pins. On their heads were high caps of a ridiculous shape made of sheep's skin and adorned with glass beads. A few of the principal men, who rode nearest to the elephant, had been clothed in sheep's skin with the woolly side outwards, so that the common people compared them to bears. When the prisoners had passed, they were followed by Nawab Mohd. Amin Khan Chin, accompanied by his son Qamruddin Khan and his son-in-law Zakariya Khan. In this order the procession passed on through the streets to the palace."⁴⁷

The people on both sides of the roads ridiculed Banda Singh Bahadur and laughed at the appearance of his followers. But the Sikhs were unmoved by their mockery and stood all that disgrace calmly. In other words, in spite of these humiliations, their morale and spirits remained very high. When the procession passed through the streets, Mirza Mohammad Harisi saw the procession and described it as follows: "Those unfortunate Sikhs who had been reduced to this last extremity, were quite happy and contended with their fate, not the slightest sign of dejection or humiliation was to be seen on their faces. In fact, most of them as they passed along on their camels seemed happy and cheerful, joyfully singing the sacred hymns of their scripture. And if anyone from amongst those in the lanes and *bazaars* called out to them that their own excesses had reduced them to that condition, they quickly retorted saying that it had been so willed by the Almighty and their capture and misfortune were in accordance with His will, and if anyone said, 'Now you will be killed', they shouted: 'Kill us! When were we afraid of death? Had we been afraid of it, how could we have fought so many battles with you? It was merely through starvation that we fell into your hands, otherwise, you know already what deeds we are capable of'."⁴⁸

This shows how daring and courageous Banda Singh Bahadur and his comrades were and that they could not be intimidated even under severe physical hardships. Not all the insults that their enemies had inflicted could rob the brave disciples of Guru Gobind Singh of their natural dignity: "Without any sign of dejection or shame, they rode on, calm and cheerful, even anxious to die the death of martyrs."⁴⁹

When the procession arrived at the fort, Banda Singh Bahadur and some of his leading comrades like Baj Singh, Fateh Singh, and others, were handed over to Ibrahim-ud-din Khan Mir Atish, on the orders of the Emperor. They were imprisoned at the Tripolia. The remaining 694⁵⁰ Sikhs were handed over to Sarbrah Khan Kotwal, for execution. Banda Singh Bahadur's first wife, Shushil Kaur, their four-year old son Ajai Singh, and the nurse of the child, were taken away by Darbar Khan Nazir of the harem.⁵¹ Itmad-ud-Daula Muhammad Amin Khan was honoured with six *khilats* or dresses of honour, a jewelled diadem, and an Arab horse with golden harness, and Qamr-ud-din Khan and Zakariya Khan each with a special dress of honour, a jewelled diadem, a horse and an elephant.⁵²

It was decided by the Mughal authorities that all the Sikhs should not be executed at one time. It was decided that only one hundred be executed on any one day. Sarbrah Khan Kotwal was detailed as the officer in charge of the execution, which began on March 5, 1716, A.D., opposite the *chabutra* Kotwali or police station on the side of the Tripolia. According to a prior plan, one hundred of them were taken out of their prison every day and were executed. Before execution, everybody was offered pardon, if he accepted Islam. Every brave Sikh flatly refused that offer and laid down his life with firmness, patience and undaunted spirit. Here, even an English testimony is available. The members of the English embassy, Messrs John Surman and Edward Stephenson had come to represent their case about their privileges to Emperor Farrukh Siyar. They saw the executions themselves and wrote about it in their despatch, dated March 10, 1716, A.D., to the Honourable Robert Hedges, President and Governor of Fort William. They wrote that one hundred of them were beheaded each day. "It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one has apostatised from the newly formed religion."⁵³

The author of *Ibrat Namah*, writes that he had been to the scene of execution on the second day, or March 6, 1716, A.D., to see the *Tamasha-i-qatal*, but he arrived there at a time when the slaughter for that day was

over and bodies were still lying there in blood and dust in the burning heat of the sun.⁵⁴

The contemporary sources said that the brave Sikhs competed with one another for martyrdom. In this connection, Macauliffe writes that "the Sikhs vied with one another for precedence in death".⁵⁵ Similarly, a Mohammadan writer of the period, as quoted by G.S. Scott in his *Religion and Short History of the Sikhs*, writes: "It is singular that these people not only behaved firmly during their execution, but disputed and wrangled with each other as to who should be slain first and even made request with the executioners to obtain preference".⁵⁶ To quote Ganda Singh: "The Sikhs welcomed death with undaunted spirit, presented their heads to the executioners with cheerful faces and with the words *Wahiguru, Wahiguru* on their lips, they joyfully gave up their lives amidst the wondering praise of the populace."⁵⁷

Appreciating the steadfastness of devotion to their leader and their firmness of faith, the author of *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, Khafi Khan, has recorded "what he saw with his own eyes".⁵⁸ Among the prisoners sentenced to death was a Sikh youth of tender age. He was the only son of a widowed mother. He had only recently been married and as yet had the *Kangan-i-Arusi*, the marriage thread, on his wrist. Hearing of the impending doom of her son with the other prisoners, the old mother approached Ratan Chand, *Diwan* of the *Wazir*, and through his influential support, pleaded the cause of her son with great feeling and earnestness before Emperor Farrukh Siyar and Sayyed Abdullah Khan. To avail of the Emperor's general offer to spare the lives of those who renounced the Sikh faith, the old woman, probably as tutored by Diwan Ratan Chand, represented that her son was only a prisoner in the hands of the Sikhs and was not a follower of the Gurus. He was brought here, she said, while in their captivity and now stood innocent among those condemned to death. Farrukh Siyar commiserated with the old woman and sent an officer with orders to release the youth. The woman arrived with the order of release just as the executioner was standing with the bloody sword over that young man's head. She presented the order for his release to the *Kotwal*. He brought out the prisoner and told him he was free. But the boy refused to be released, says Khafi Khan, and loudly cried out: "My mother is a liar. I am heart and soul a devoted follower of the Gurus. Send me quickly after my companions." No bewailing cries and tearful entreaties of his old mother and no persuasion of the state officers, writes the author of the *Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi*, could shake the young Sikh in his devotion to his faith. The spectators were further

dumfounded when the heroic boy retraced his steps back to the place of execution and calmly bowed his head before the executioner to meet his death.⁵⁹ Farrukh Siyar was taken aback and pondered over what was there that made every Sikh have no fear of death.

On being asked by the executioner for further orders of the Emperor on the boy's refusal, Farrukh Siyar replied in a halting voice as under: "It goes against my grain to doom this boy to death, his courage and bravery bid me spare his life. I cannot, however, go back on my own word. I have vowed to exterminate the Sikhs throughout the country. I am, therefore, compelled to order this foolish and unthinking boy to be put to death."⁶⁰ After the execution of the Sikhs which went on for seven days, there was a lull. Banda Singh Bahadur and his principal men were not executed immediately and were kept in the fort for three months. The object of their detention was to get a clue of the treasure.⁶¹ But the *Khalsa*, who believed in the principle of *Wand Shakna* (the sharing of earnings) could not be expected to have any treasure as such. So when the rulers were disappointed to get the clue, they decided to execute Banda Singh Bahadur.

The fate reserved for Banda Singh Bahadur is too excruciating to be described, says Dr. Ganda Singh.⁶² Ultimately, the Emperor issued an order that Ibrahimuddin, Mir-i-Atish, and Sarbarah Khan Kotwal should take Banda Singh Bahadur to the mausoleum of Khwaja Qutab-ud-din, opposite the mausoleum of Emperor Bahadur Shah. "His tongue and eyes should be pulled out and skin be torn off from his flesh. His bones be separated from his flesh and his son be also killed."⁶³ The order was complied with on June 19, 1716, A.D. Banda Singh Bahadur, his son Ajai Singh, Sardar Baj Singh, Ram Singh, Bhai Fateh Singh, Ali Singh, Gulab Singh Bakhshi, and others who had been confined in the fort of Delhi, were taken out of the fort in procession. The same old embroidered red turban and cloak were put on Banda Singh Bahadur. Fettered and chained all over, he was placed in an iron cage which was fastened on the back of an elephant. His companions⁶⁴ were put on the bare back of camels. They were preceded by Sarbrah Khan Kotwal at the head of his police force. In the rear was Ibrahim-ud-din, Head of Artillery. The procession passed through the main streets of Delhi. They were taken to the tomb of Khwaja Qutab-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki near Qutab Minar in Mehrauli, 16 km from the Red Fort. They were led around the tomb of the late Emperor Bahadur Shah who had failed in suppressing Banda Singh's rebellion, so as to give satisfaction to his soul. The leading nobles had already gathered there.

Banda Singh Bahadur was taken out of the cage and seated on the ground. As usual he was offered life on his embracing Islam. The proposal was rejected. Though heavily chained, his right hand was freed. His son, Ajai Singh, was placed in his lap and a dagger put in his right hand to kill the child. Banda Singh Bahadur did not stir. Thereupon, the dagger was thrust into the body of the child and his heart and entrails were thrust into Banda Singh's mouth. He shut his mouth and he remained absolutely unmoved.⁶⁵ Muhammad Amin Khan, later Prime Minister, was standing nearby. He came closer and intensely looked into the eyes of Banda Singh Bahadur. He was deeply impressed with his noble features. He remarked: "It is surprising that one who shows so much acuteness in his features and so much of nobility in his conduct, should have been guilty of such horrors." In complete composure and tranquillity, Banda Singh Bahadur replied: "I will tell you. Whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the path of equity and to abandon themselves to all kinds of excesses, then the Providence never fails to raise up a scourge like me to chastise a race so depraved; but when the measure of punishment is full then he raises up men like you to bring him to punishment."⁶⁶

Then on the orders of the Emperor, Banda Singh's flesh was torn off with red-hot *pincers* and the process continued till he died. During his tortures, Banda Singh Bahadur showed unparalleled calmness and died with unshaken constancy, writes Elphinstone, "glorifying in having been raised up by God to be scourge to the inequities and oppressions of the age."⁶⁷ On Banda Singh's torture to death, Ganda Singh reports thus: "First of all, his right eye was removed with the point of a butcher's knife and then his left. His left foot was cut off next, and then his two hands were severed from his body. His flesh was then torn with red hot *pincers* and finally he was decapitated and hacked to pieces, limb by limb."⁶⁸

This horrid savagery lasted the whole day. Banda Singh displayed heavenly calm, no tears, no cries, no groaning, no expression of grief, no jerk in the body, and no sign of pain. Throughout he remained composed and collected, serene and steady, unruffled and unstirred. A curious creature was he, this Banda Singh Bahadur, remarks Dr. Hari Ram Gupta. He further says that he had a power of concentrating his mind on something away from his body and his surroundings with such intensity as if he were in a trance.⁶⁹

This abominable scene was staged before the very eyes of Banda's officials who included Fateh Singh, Ali Singh and Gulab Singh Bakhshi who had remained in the Lohgarh fort after Banda Singh's escape, and some other close comrades of Banda Singh Bahadur were also beheaded on June 20, 1716, A.D., next day, at the same place. These powerful warriors had resigned themselves to the will of God as the final consummation. They were tried by God and destiny, and succeeded in their right for maintaining the highest Sikh ideals, and they had not been found wanting in any respect.

Coming to the fate of Banda Singh's wife, Bibi Shushil Kaur, Karam Singh historian writes that the Raj Kumari of Chamba could not see the torturing of her son and she accepted Islam. In the recent work on Banda Singh Bahadur, Dr. Raj Pal Singh, on the basis of Shiv Das Lakhnavi and *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam* also writes: "Banda Singh Bahadur's wife was converted to Islam, entered the palace and became one of the slave of the royal seraglio." But Mata Joginder Kaur of Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, and the author of the present work, do not agree with this view. Mata Joginder Kaur asserts that it is wrong to say that Raj Kumari Shushil Kaur embraced Islam. She takes pains to explain that the lady who preferred to stay in the jungle with Banda Singh Bahadur for about two years and could come to the battlefield with him, could not be expected to be converted to Islam. Her argument seems to be convincing also. This author, in her paper "Bibi Shushil Kaur", also proved that when Bibi Shushil Kaur saw that her honour would not be safe in the hands of the imperial officers in the royal harem, she committed suicide.⁷¹

Banda Singh Bahadur and his comrades did not die in vain. This tragic event changed the course of not only Sikh history but also of the history of Punjab. Banda Singh had shown to the Sikhs the difference between those who were in power and those who were out of it. The lesson of power once practically taught could not be forgotten by a militant community. They continuously worked to regain what they had lost and in half a century became the undisputed masters of the land of five rivers.

Banda Singh Bahadur, the great leader was part of the Sikh revolution in which the *Khalsa* was seen as a dynamic integrative force. After having dedicated his entire life to the well-being of the masses

Banda Singh Bahadur had this to say of himself: "I am Banda of the 10th Master." In fact he had given his body and mind, his existence's physics and his experience's metaphysics to the entire Indian community which to him was one organic whole perceived as a continuing passion play of an ageless nation in which the discordance of diversity was eventually absorbed by the concordance of unity. And for this commitment to the community he and his contribution must be remembered.⁷²

The execution of Banda Singh Bahadur was a staggering catastrophe in history, and the minds of the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims who held him in great esteem and reverence, were rudely shaken. He was uplifter of society and took keen interest in the politics of his day. He was deeply concerned about the disabilities of the people. He strongly resented the sufferings of the people at the hands of the oppressive rule of the Mughals and for some time threw away the Mughal imperialists out of the vast territory of the Punjab. After the execution of Banda Singh, a general proclamation was issued for the destruction of the Sikhs, wherever they were found. They were hunted down like beasts and any man who killed a Sikh could claim a reward from the Viceroy of Lahore.⁷³

Banda Singh had earned his well-deserved fame as a crusader by his concerted action, daring, sacrifice and innumerable heroic deeds. Banda Singh was dead a long time ago. But before his death he had set up the tradition of great ability, great courage, great perseverance, great sacrifice—all directed to the service of the downtrodden and oppressed. He had a flame-like quality, a fire within himself which burned and consumed him and drew him relentlessly forward, it made him almost oblivious of all other matters, even the intimate personal relations. He had neither friends nor foes but a mission to fulfil. He did a herculean job to achieve his goal, but never compromised on his principles, and became a martyr for the cause of the poor and the *Khalsa Panth*. He possessed the qualities of a true hero. Bhagat Kabir says in *Adi Granth*:

He alone is the hero who fights to defend
the humble and the helpless,
who, even though hacked limb by limb,
will not flee from the field.⁷⁴

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
2. *Akhbarat*, dated October 15, 1712 AD.
3. Saif-ud-Daula Abd-us-Samad Khan Bahadur Diler-i-Jang, a descendant of Khwaja Ahrar of Turan, was a brother-in-law of Itmad-ud-Daula Muhammad Amin Khan Bahadur, whose wife was a sister of his wife, both being the daughters of his uncle Khwaja Zakariya. He had come to India in the reign of Aurangzeb and at first had the rank of 400. In Bahadur Shah's reign he rose to the rank of 700. In the war of succession between the sons of Bahadur Shah, he joined Zulfiqar Khan and distinguished himself by slaying prince Jahan Shah. His meritorious services in the struggle between Jahandar Shah and Farrukh Siyar won him the rank of five thousand, with five thousand horses, and the title of Diler-i-Jang, and he was made the Governor of Lahore.
4. *Farrukh Siyar Nama*, Kanwar Tazkirah, quoted by William Irvine, pp. 309-10.
5. Kanwar, *Ibid.*, quoted by William Irvine, p. 310.
6. *Akhbarat*, dated July 17, 1713, A.D.
7. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
8. *Ibid.*
9. See Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
10. Irvine William, *The Later Mughals*, pp. 308-9.
11. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
14. Qasim, *Ibrat Namah*, p. 41. Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, i, 80. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 162.
15. *Akhbarat*, dated April 10, 1715, A.D.
16. See Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Muhammad Qasim, *Ibrat Namah*, pp. 41-42. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
Muhammad Qasim was present in these operations and at the siege of Gurdas Nangal, being then in the service of Arif Beg Khan, Deputy Governor of Lahore.
19. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta is of the opinion that it was 6 km to the west of Gurdaspur, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Now a beautiful Gurudwara and a Sarovar are being built there.
20. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
21. Khafi Khan in Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 457.
22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibrat Namah*, p. 42, quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
24. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 168.
25. *Akhbarat*, dated 30th April, 1715, A.D.
26. *Ibid.*, dated May 1, 1715, A.D.
27. *Ibid.*, dated June 14, 1715, A.D.
28. *Ibid.*, dated July 3, 1715, A.D.
29. Khafi Khan, as quoted by Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
31. Irvine, William, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-15.
32. Macauliffe, M.A., *op. cit.*, p. 252.
33. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
34. Sahib Kaur, the second wife of Banda Singh Bahadur, was living at *Dehra Baba Banda Singh Bahadur* in Jammu territory and it was at this time that she gave birth to her son, Ranjeet Singh.
35. Irvine, William, *op. cit.*, p. 315.
36. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 174. Also see, Sohan Singh Seetal, *op. cit.*, p. 133. But Khazan Singh, *op. cit.*, puts this date as January 1716, A.D.
37. Dr. Raj Pal Singh quoted *Akhbarat*, which gives the date 12th December 1715, A.D.
38. *Akhbarat*, dated December 13, 1715, A.D.
39. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
40. Irvine, William, *The Later Mughals*, p. 315.
41. Kamwar Tazkirah, *Farrukh Siyar Nama*, quoted by William Irvine, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-16.
42. Irvine, William, *op. cit.*, p. 315.
43. Karam Singh, historian, estimates their number at 200.
44. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
46. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, Amritsar (1962) p. 156.
47. Harisi, *Ibrat Namah*, 52 a-b. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 180. Irvine, William, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-17.
48. Harisi Mirza Mohammad, *Ibrat Namah*, p. 52, quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-82.
49. Wilson, C.R., *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, pp. 96-99.

50. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
51. Harbans Kaur Sagoo, "Bibi Shushil Kaur", in a book entitled *Sobhavantian*, edited by Dr. Mohinder Kaur Gill, pp. 115-47.
52. Kanwar Tazkirah, p. 179 a-b, quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
53. Wheeler, J.T., *Early Records of British India*, Calcutta (1878), p. 180.
54. Harisi, Mirza Muhammad, *Ibrat Namah*, p. 53. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
55. Macauliffe, M.A., *The Sikh Religion, its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Oxford (1909) p. 252.
56. Scott, G.B., *Religion and Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 33.
57. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
58. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II, p. 766. Quoted by Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-88.
59. This incident is quoted by almost all contemporary writers.
Muntakhib-ul-Lubab, Vol. II, p. 766.
 Elliot, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 458.
 Bahar-ul-Mawwaj, p. 228 a.
 Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol. XIII.
 Shiv Das, *Manavvar-ul-Kalam*.
 Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
Tarikh-e-Muhammad Shahi, 247b. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, 188, f.n.
Anecdotes from Sikh History, No. 4, Lahore (1906) p. 24.
 Anonymous author of *Iqbalnama* has also recorded this incident.
60. *Anecdotes from Sikh History*, No. 4, Lahore (1906), p. 24. Quoted by G.S. Deol, p. 102.
61. Wheeler, J.T., p. 180, Karam Singh, p. 184, Mata Joginder Kaur, p. 27.
 Kanwar Tazkirah, p. 179 b. See letter quoted by Kanwar, letter dated 10th March 1716 A.D., from Messrs. John Surman and Edward Stephenson, the members of the English Embassy to Emperor Farrukh Siyar, to the honourable Robert Hedges, President and Governor of Fort William. This letter is also available in J.T. Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, p. 180 and in C.R. Wilson's *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, pp. 96-98.

Letter XII

The Honourable Robert Hedges Esq.,

President and Governor of Fort William and Council in Bengal.

Honourable Sir,

We wrote your honour on the 7th ultimo since which we have received no letters.

.....

The great Rebel Gooroo (Guru) who has been for these 20 years so troublesome in the subaship (*subah*) of Lahore is at length taken with all his family and attendance by Abd-us-Samad cawn the *Suba* (*Subedar* i.e. Governor) of that province. Some days ago they entered the city laden with fetters, his whole attendants which were left alive being about seven hundred and eighty all severally mounted on camels which were sent out of the city for that purpose, besides about two thousand heads stuck upon poles, being those who died by the sword in battle. He was carried into the presence of the king and from thence to a close prison. He at present has his life prolonged with most of his *mut suddys* (*mutasaddis*) in hope to get an account of his treasure in the several parts of his kingdom and of those that assisted him, when afterwards he will be executed, for the rest there are 100 each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatised from this new formed religion. . . .

.....

We are,

Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,

Your most obedient humble servants,
John Surman,
Edward Stephenson

Dilly,
March the 10th, 1715-16

62. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
63. *Akhbarat*, 9 June, 1716, A.D.
64. According to Dr. Ganda Singh they were 26 in number. But Dr. H.R. Gupta gave the number as 18.
65. A similar view is held by Karam Singh Historian and M.S. Elphinstone and Ganda Singh. But some writers like G.B. Scott, Macauliffe, Sohan Singh and Khazan Singh point out that Banda Singh Bahadur cut the throat of his son himself, which view cannot be said to be correct for the simple reason that such a brave father as Banda Singh Bahadur was, could not be expected to take the life of his own son under threat or compulsion.
66. *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, p. 403. Raymond's translation, Vol. I, p. 91, see Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 35.
67. Elphinstone, M.S., *The History of India*, Vol. I, London (1916), p. 669.
68. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
69. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

70. Joginder Kaur, *Baba Banda Bahadur*, p. 28.
71. See "Bibi Shushil Kaur", by Dr. Harbans Kaur Sagoo in a book entitled *Sobhabantian*, edited by Dr. M.K. Gill.
72. Raj Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
73. Payne, C.H., *A Short History of Sikhs*, London, p. 45.
74. *Adi Granth*, p. 1105.

ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥
ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਨਾ ਛਾਡੈ ਖੇਤੁ ॥

Epilogue

Banda Singh Bahadur was undeniably one of the most remarkable men that India had produced in the eighteenth century. Banda Singh Bahadur was a Rajput. The blood of a *Kshatriya* flowed in his veins. Thus, he inherited the spirit of bravery, heroism, love of independence, and self-sacrifice from his race. This spirit was further strengthened by his long residence in Maharashtra where he had seen how Shambhuji, son of Shivaji, his step brother Rajaram and his widow Tara Bai, had carried on a life and death struggle against Aurangzeb who was personally leading a campaign of annihilation against the Marathas. Banda Singh's dormant spirit of nationalism was awakened and put into its practical application by Guru Gobind Singh. His nationalist enthusiasm was further aroused by the Guru's sufferings and sacrifices, and ultimately by his death as a result of the Mughal trickery.¹

In personal appearance Banda Singh Bahadur, according to the *Mirat-i-Waridat* of Muhammad Shafi Warid, resembled Guru Gobind Singh. Thin of physique and of medium height, he was of light brown complexion. It was, therefore, that those who had seen him only from a distance or had only heard of him and had not the opportunity of knowing him personally and closely, had taken him to be Guru Gobind Singh himself and had recorded him as such—as Guru Gobind Singh—in their writings.² The scanty records of the contemporary writers give little information about the many qualities he possessed. Dr. Hari Ram

Gupta sums up his qualities as: "Curiously, Banda had a great resemblance in looks with Guru Gobind Singh. He possessed the same medium height and bulk of the body and colour of the face. Under his bushy beard and moustache and long hair on head, the facial features also looked alike. Further, both spoke the same language which was a mixture of Hindi and Punjabi. Both were fond of covering themselves with arms cap-a-pie. Both were in possession of a commanding voice and manner which resulted in implicit obedience from their followers. Both could arouse the zeal for supreme sacrifice of their devotees."³ The nobleness of his features, with sharp and shining eyes, impressed his greatness even on the minds of his worst enemies like Itmad-ud-Daulah Muhammad Amin Khan who praised him for "so much of acuteness in his features and so much of nobility in his conduct". Depicting his personal qualities, Karam Singh, the historian, writes: "He was not so strong as he was swift (dashing) and no weapon except arrow and dagger appealed to him. He was a good horse-rider and he could stand continual physical strains."⁴ He would, of course, ride on for days without being fatigued. Similarly, Sohan Singh says that "in dexterity, he (Banda Singh) had surpassed even Sewaji (Shivaji)".⁵ Though not a giant in his built, he was very active and would keep at bay far stronger men in the battlefield. He was a good marksman, *Banduq* or *Ramjanga*, as they called a matchlock, being a favourite weapon of the Sikhs, but he was excessively fond of his sword and bow.⁶

Banda Singh Bahadur was very brave and courageous. He possessed a most fearless and undaunted spirit. He never knuckled under physical influence nor could any sort of oppression and pressure intimidate him. To quote M'Gregor: "He (Banda Singh) is allowed on all hands, to have been a man of undaunted valour and bravery, and the coolness with which he met his death."⁷ It has earned praise for Banda Singh even from men like Khafi Khan. In Cunningham's opinion, Banda (Singh) was obeyed ungrudgingly and blindly, because he was an energetic and daring leader. He also calls him "an able and enterprising leader". According to Malcolm, "Banda performed prodigies of valour".⁸ The personal magnetism of Banda Singh, writes Dr. Gokul Chand Narang, was too great and it was his undaunted courage and extraordinary valour which knit his followers closely to him.⁹

Banda Singh renounced the world at 15, and lived like a *bairagi* for about twenty-three years. At the age of thirty-eight Guru Gobind Singh met, baptised and appointed him commander of the *Khalsa*. Thus, Banda Singh had travelled from north to south and back again, and he had seen

all the destruction, rape and rapine of the Mughal Emperors and nobles. The Rajput spirit was throbbing in him. It was lying dormant under an ash-smearred skin. This spirit was roused by Guru Gobind Singh and retaliation was a natural consequence.¹⁰ Thereafter, during the momentous period from 1708 A.D. to 1715 A.D., the Sikhs under the able leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur waged long-drawn battles against the tyrannical and oppressive Mughal officers and the emperors, united the warring people of Punjab, freeing the tiller of the land from the clutches of the tyrant *Zamindars*, and thus established the pioneer commonwealth of the *Khalsa*. Banda Singh Bahadur as commander of the *Khalsa*, liberated a large part of Punjab and made his headquarter at Mukhlisipur, renamed Lohgarh. He introduced an official seal and struck coins in the name of Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak. He also introduced a new *Sammatt*, or year, commencing with the victory of Sarhind. He commanded a big army and appointed new officials (Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims) to run the administration in place of tyrants and corrupt officials. Nonetheless, he always declared himself to be a *Banda* or slave of the Tenth Guru and the coins, seals, *hukamnama* testify to his ungrudging and unflinching devotion to the Guru and the *Khalsa*. That is why, he had left behind such a splendid legacy as the first commander of the Sikh pioneer state that the inscription of his seal was later adopted in toto by the Sikh *Sardars* of the *misals*, for their coins. Thus the aim of Banda Singh Bahadur was not merely to weaken the Mughal power, but to destroy it root and branch, and to establish in its place national rule or self-government, which he did, though for a short period. Banda Singh was the first to lay the foundation of political sovereignty of the Sikhs. He had brought about a revolution in the minds of the people.

Banda Singh was a great reformer. He broke down the barriers of caste, creed, and religion. He appointed sweepers and cobblers as big officers (revenue collectors) before whom high caste Hindus, *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* stood with folded hands awaiting their orders. He believed in socialism. He distributed all his riches among his followers. He abolished the *Zamindari system* and freed the peasants from the tyrant *Zamindars*. He was opposed to the use of intoxicants and drugs. He prohibited drinking of *bhang* and wine and smoking of tobacco or *charas* which was clear from his *hukamnama* to the Sangat of Jaunpur. Banda Singh possessed the high ideals of life, sincerity, honesty, indomitable spirit, undoubted enthusiasm, rare daring, single-minded devotion to his cause, dare-devilry of the highest type, and nobility of character. It was for this reason that none of his over seven hundred followers renounced his faith to save his life. Even a young lad who had been pardoned by

the Emperor refused to leave Banda Singh in the face of death. In the words of Hari Ram Gupta: "Banda Singh showed that the only way to meet the eternal foe was to adopt the policy of paying them in their own coin, a tooth, for a tooth and an eye for an eye, and to pay off old scores. The Sikhs learnt this lesson from Banda Singh and admirably succeeded in establishing their own rule in their homeland."¹¹

Banda Singh Bahadur was one of the most unforgettable characters in medieval Indian history whose role has not yet been put into right perspective before the people of this country. The leadership of the Sikhs in their fight against the tyrannical Mughal officers of the *Subas* of Delhi and Lahore after the assassination of Guru Gobind Singh, was assumed by him at the behest of the Tenth Guru as commander of the *Khalsa* and he lived and died for it. Banda Singh Bahadur, taking advantage of the distracted state of the empire, gradually became very powerful in Punjab. He created armies out of the void as it were, to fight the Mughals, and united the scattered atoms like the Sikhs under his leadership into an almost invincible army out for conquest and expansion. Like their leader, his army was absolutely fearless and determined to resist all types of hazards. They even believed in mounting offensives against the evil doers and oppressors. That is why they drew considerable support from the poor masses. His soldiers belonged to Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. But Banda Singh Bahadur infused among them the spirit of equality, brotherhood and fraternization. Commenting on this aspect of Banda Singh Bahadur's influence, Ghulam Mohyuddin, a contemporary of Banda Singh, writes that low caste Hindus, termed as the dreg of society by the hellish Hindus, swelled the ranks of Banda Singh.¹²

Banda Singh Bahadur was a first rate Sikh warrior of his times like his master, he was a champion of the persecuted and the downtrodden and raised the lowest of the low to the highest position under his government. He carried on a relentless war against the Mughals, no doubt, but he never allowed it to be reduced to an anti-Muslim communal strife. His was a political struggle for the freedom of the country and he was able to draw a line between religion and politics. He made no distinction between Hindu, Sikh and Muslim. Whosoever suffered at the hands of the Mughal officials received his sympathy and help. Within a month of his conquest of Sarhind, he appointed one Jan Mohammad, *Zamindar* of Gulab Nagar, as the administrator of the *pargana*, and he also desired him to bring in Sardar Khan of Choondla. His programme of liberation of the oppressed peasantry attracted as

many as five thousand Muslims to join his army and it was reported to Emperor Bahadur Shah on April 28, 1711, A.D., from the neighbourhood of Kalanaur that the Sikh leader had allowed his Muslim adherents fullest religious liberty of recitation and prayer *bāng*, *khutba* and *namaz*—in the Sikh military camps. This speaks volumes of his attitude towards the Muslims. Banda Singh Bahadur was one of the great soldiers and generals of his time. The successive victories of his forces over the imperial forces in the *Subas* of Delhi and Lahore in early 1709, A.D., single him out as an outstanding leader of men. It was not only the *Faujdar*s of these *Subas* whom he had to reckon with, but also to combat the combined onslaught of the army of the Mughal emperors and the rulers of different states of the then Indian polity.

Banda Singh Bahadur had descended on Punjab to espouse the cause of the oppressed, the weak and the downtrodden. Immediately on reaching Kharkhoda, he had declared a "general war on all the oppressors of the people, and by attending in right earnest to the complaints of the aggrieved, he let them understand that he was their liberator commissioned by providence to release them from their centuries-old servitude".¹³ From the very beginning, Banda Singh initiated his struggle against the Mughal state and the intermediary *Zamindars*. This made masses to sympathise with him as he was fighting for the redressal of their long overdue demands. Peasants, in particular, turned sympathisers and quite a big segment of them joined the *Khalsa*. The impact of this event on the farming community was at once deep and widespread because "they found in it their deliverance from the feudal vexations and political servitude of the Mughals".¹⁴ Commenting on how Banda Singh Bahadur could rally people around him, Fauja Singh says that his "general promise at the very outset of his campaign to distribute the conquered lands among those who would fight for him, and his land reforms after the conquest of Sarhind, popularised his cause and made him the rallying point of the poor agricultural classes, thereby broadening the base of his movement. As a result, he was able to mobilise a huge mass of people for the execution of his grandiose plans".¹⁵

The movement of Banda Singh against the tyrants and oppressive Mughal officers and the Emperor, also had the active support of the vast majority of the Punjabi Hindus in addition to the Sikhs, who joined it in large numbers and for a time gave it the semblance of a Hindu resistance against the onslaught of Islam. This was particularly so in the years following the death of Guru Gobind Singh, when the Muslim ruling

class exploited the religious sentiments of the Muslim masses against the Hindus and the Sikhs.¹⁶ "Masses began to flock to the camp of Banda Singh Bahadur, men in arms came to join his colours, women to seek his blessings for their families. He preached sermons and gave benedictions. Having an avowed contempt for worldly goods, he gave away the offerings people placed before him. As stories of his piety and generosity spread, more men and money began to pour in."¹⁷ In the same way, encouraged by the response, Banda Singh's open proclamation further swelled the number of his supporters. He had proclaimed general protection to anyone "threatened by thieves, dacoits or highway robbers, troubled by Mohammadan bigots, or in any way subjected to injustice or ill-treatment". In the absence of law and order, particularly in the villages, the poor heaved a sigh of relief and the masses began to pour into Banda Singh's camp. Banda Singh's liberal approach to men and matters, his purity and simplicity of character and conduct, his valour and coolness even in dire difficulties, made him champion of the downtrodden, irrespective of their caste, clan or religion. They also reciprocated these feelings in abundance and came forward to live and die with him.

Commenting on the support to Banda Singh Bahadur by the populace of the then Punjab province, Muzaffar Alam¹⁸ says that the *Jats* of Rohtak-Sonepat region extended him full support when he appeared near Kharkhanda. Besides, a large number of *Jats* of the *parganas* along either side of the Beas and the Ravi and the Shah Nahar (the royal canal), sympathised and acted in collusion with the Sikhs of Banda Singh.¹⁹ The *Jats* of Bari Doab supplied arms and horses to Banda Singh Bahadur during the entire period of his struggle against the Mughals. *Chakla* Sarhind was the second largest and the most important region where Banda Singh Bahadur had a strong following, and this enabled him to make it the base for his operations beyond the Yamuna and the Beas. Even at moments of extreme difficulties when the Sikhs ran off into the hills he could depend on the supply of provisions for his army from *Chakla* Sarhind. In the words of Khafi Khan, it becomes clear that, with some exceptions, Banda Singh led predominantly the uprisings of the *Jats*. It is not without significance that the *Jats* were the dominant caste in some of the *parganas* where Banda Singh had support.²⁰ The question arises why did the *Jats* extend their support to Banda Singh Bahadur and to what religion did they belong, Muzaffar Alam says: "Our sources do not help us in identifying the religion of these *Jats*. They may or may not have been the followers of Guru Gobind Singh."²¹ They extended support and cooperation to Banda Singh because "the *Jats* had begun to

displace the *Khatri*s from the leadership in Sikh religion" by the sixth decade of the 17th century. Eventually with the extension of agricultural activities and establishment of the *Khalsa*, they renewed their attempts with added vigour. At the time of writing the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, its author noted that although the Gurus had been *Khatri*, "they have made the *Khatri*s subservient to the *Jats* who are the lowest among the *Vaishya*. Thus, most of the big *masands* of the Gurus are *Jats*."²² Banda Singh Bahadur-led Sikh uprising gave the *Jats* an opportunity not only to take over the leadership of the locality but also gave a chance to use their arms to replace the tyrannical local Mughal officials.

The Mughal rule was subjected to a changed socio-economic conditions within the Empire, in particular what is called the *Jagirdari crisis* which was one of the fundamental problems of the decaying Empire.²³ The political needs of the Empire compelled the Emperor to make new recruitment from among the nobility in the Deccan and this resulted in a considerable increase in the numerical strength of the *Jagirdars* (nobility). The military needs of the Empire led to continued grants of *mansabs* to the newcomers. So a stage arrived when, though *mansabs* were awarded, *Jagirs* could not be given.²⁴ Moreover, rise in the requirements of the ruling class without a corresponding rise in the agricultural production, resulted directly in the growth of economic pressure on the producing classes.²⁵ The periodic transfer of *Jagirs* which was meant to prevent the nobles from forming local ties and becoming autonomous potentates, was rigidly adhered to throughout the reign of Aurangzeb. But this system of *Jagir* transfers led to oppression by the *Jagirdars* and this oppression made peasants or *Jats* very miserable and rebellious.²⁶

The medieval Indian economy was basically rural agricultural and Punjab was an integral part of this economy.²⁷ The *Jagirdari crisis* of the Mughal government also affected the Punjabi peasants who suffered from intense oppression and tyrannical system of the *Jagirdars* and scions of the ruling classes. The *Zamindars* or government officials responsible for the payment of fixed land revenue of the villages entrusted to them, had come to arrogate to themselves the position of absolute proprietors who could turn out the actual cultivator at their sweet will.²⁸ The authorities did not interfere in their internal arrangements so long as they paid their contributions regularly. They were free to exact any amount from the peasants or *Jats* who were practically reduced to the position of slaves.²⁹ These exactions from the peasantry were so repressive and arbitrary that they caused widespread discontent. Thus,

seething with discontent and deprivation of their traditional rights in land, the Punjabi peasantry, fully conscious of the conditions, was awaiting a leadership to make a bid not merely to resist the oppressive and tyrannical authority of the Mughal bureaucratic structure, but also to establish an autonomous state on the traditional model.³⁰ Dr. Satish Chandra writes that the Sikhs endeavoured to establish "a . . . kind of equalitarian society with a peasant-clans-basis with heavy ethical overtones".³¹

It was at this juncture that Banda Singh Bahadur appeared as the political leader of the *Khalsa* with a motive to fight against the oppressive imperial officials. On reaching Punjab he perceived that only by mobilizing discontented peasantry could he succeed in his mission. He issued a proclamation offering protection to tillers of the soil and asked them to stop paying revenue to the government which could not save them from the clutches of landlords or *Zamindars*. The proclamation was like a spark in a highly inflammable situation. The peasantry of Malwa rose against the *Zamindars* and local officials.³² These peasants always stood by him. With the support of these peasants Banda Singh achieved marvellous successes in his military exploits, and soon became the undisputed master of the territory from Sadhaura to Raikot and from Machhiwara and Ludhiana to Karnal.³³ After establishing a Sikh state, he abolished the *Zamindari system*.³⁴ In his seven stormy years, Banda Singh changed the class structure of landholdings in the southern half of the big Muslim *Zamindar* families of Malwa and Jullundur Doab. Large estates were broken up into small holdings in the hands of the Sikhs or Hindu peasants which may be described as *Riayah Khud Kashta* peasants. Getting inspirations from Banda Singh's achievement, peasants of Doaba revolted and defeated the Mughal *Faujdar* at Rahon. Soon they captured Jullundur and Hoshiarpur and by the autumn 1710, A.D., they liberated whole of the Jullundur Doab.³⁵ The revolt spread across the Sutlej over the whole of Majha region. Within a short period, Punjab became like a surging sea of free peasantry with only two small Islands of Mughal authority in its midst—the capital city of Lahore and the Afghan town of Kasur.³⁶ From Yamuna to the Ravi and beyond, the only person who mattered was Banda Singh, and the only power that commanded respect was that of the peasant armies.³⁷

In the words of A.C. Banerji, Banda Singh's struggle was in some respect a class war, and was almost entirely a peasant movement. Under the movement, the *Zamindars* were ejected from their lands and the tillers of the soil became owners. The result was a sudden socio-economic

upheaval.³⁸ It may be mentioned that the creation of the *Khalsa* on the model of village panchayats provided an agency for making the masses conscious of the need to preserve their traditional social organisation, for launching a struggle against tyranny and oppression of the semi-feudal Mughal bureaucratic structure. During those days when the economic links were too weak to create a movement of the masses without leadership, it was essential to have a leader to rally round. The vacuum was filled by Banda Singh Bahadur.

Thus the *Jagirdari crisis* left the peasants with no other alternative but to create a power structure which suited the immediate needs of the peasant society which, of course, was compatible with the *Khalsa* organisation. The latter was the source of inspiration and determined the course and character of the movement. Therefore, it may be said that the perceptions of the conditions of the masses and the tradition of the *Khalsa* to resist tyranny, complemented each other. These two factors integrated the Sikh peasants' struggle against the Mughal authority in the region during most of the 18th century.

In the beginning, the trading community represented by the *Khatri*s extended support to Banda Singh Bahadur and one of them named "Gulaboo" even sacrificed himself to enable Banda Singh to make good his escape from Lohgarh in 1710 A.D. Since the *Khatri*s and the *Jats* had altogether divergent political and economic interests in the continued struggle against the Mughals, there arose rift amongst them. Whereas, the *Jats* were beneficiaries of the Sikh uprising in the sense that they finished off the oppressive intermediaries and became masters of their landholdings, the interests of the *Khatri* merchants were closely linked with the continued political stability and maintenance of imperial authority. When the peasant uprising spearheaded by Banda Singh began to cause considerable loss to the trading and merchant class and the moneylenders, they began to extend support to the Mughals. The urban *Khatri*s residing in important trading centres like Lahore, Sialkot, Bajwara, Haibatpur, Patti, Batala, Ropar, Samana, etc., financed the voluntary efforts of the pro-imperial elements to fight against Banda Singh Bahadur and his supporters. The services of the *Khatri*s were duly acknowledged, and some of them like Suba Chand, Rattan Chand, Mohakam Singh, Bakht Mal and others were appointed to important positions in imperial services under Jahandar Shah and Farrukh Siyar.³⁹

In addition to these *Jats* (peasants), the *Banjaras*—a class of grain dealers—also helped Banda Singh. They always tried to maintain the

supply of provisions to Banda Singh's army even when they were besieged in a fort.⁴⁰ In the hills also, they supplied him with the needed provisions and also acted as informers for him.⁴¹ Some Hindu *faqirs*, *yogis*, *sanyasis* and *bairagis* actively espoused the cause of Banda Singh by working as spies in the imperial camp and then conveying the news to Banda Singh Bahadur about the moves of the imperial forces beforehand.⁴² Some unidentified people also extended help to the cause of Banda Singh Bahadur. It is reported that some people purchased horses and ammunition to be delivered to the Sikh rebels and they carried the same through the Kohistan. The Emperor ordered that immediate steps should be taken to check the movements of these *spies* and the foodgrains and ammunition to the rebels. "If captured, they should be punished."⁴³

The oppressed Hindus looked upon Banda Singh as the champion of Hinduism and he was regarded by "the Hindu as the scourge of the tyrant Mughals sent by God to punish them for their crimes. Oppressed Hindus resorted to him for help which was willingly and efficiently given, a fact which had a great influence in promoting the growth of the Sikh power".⁴⁴ Same was true with the Muslim followers of Banda Singh Bahadur who extended them fullest security of life and property as well as ensured religious freedom to them. In fact, Banda Singh Bahadur was a man of the masses whom they obeyed ungrudgingly and blindly, and when he asked his followers to lay down arms, not one disobeyed him and piled up their arms before him and doors were opened unto the enemy to face sure death.⁴⁵

Banda Singh Bahadur was a first-rate Sikh warrior of his times. He was a devoted military commander of the *Khalsa*. Commenting on Banda Singh as a warrior, Dr. Ganda Singh writes: "In the field of battle, he was one of the bravest and the most daring, sometimes to the extent of recklessness."⁴⁶ He had the gift of quick mental appraisal. In the battlefield, he could appreciate the situation very quickly, thus decide his objective and make out his plan at once. Having made a simple and straightforward plan, he executed it with speed, determination and vigour, without wasting a single minute. His speed, alertness, immediate dash in the battlefield, were some of the causes of his success.

Banda Singh Bahadur had mastered the tactics and strategy of war of his time. His chief tactic was to assess the strength of the enemy first and then fight. He fought a battle only when he was sure of his superior strength and victory, and he preferred retreat and be on the defensive rather

than flee after fighting. To quote Karam Singh, historian: "His approach in the war was that if he did not have sufficient men for the fight, then he retreated before the fight. He preferred retreat to defeat in the battle. His retreat cannot be taken as flight, but it was his tactics of war."⁴⁷

Another war tactic of Banda Singh was that he first appraised which side of the enemy was weak. Then he attacked them at their weak points which could turn the table in his favour. Similarly, surprise was another fundamental of war tactics in which Banda Singh was never wanting. In his battles with the imperial forces, he used to force surprise attacks. It was in pursuance of this object that the Sikhs under Banda Singh used to withdraw at times, giving an impression to the enemy that they were beating a retreat under the pressure of enemy forces. But when some imperial forces had followed Banda Singh and his fighters for 4 or 5 miles, and were cut off from their main force, Banda Singh and his comrades used to turn around and fall upon the enemy, thus achieving the effects of a surprise attack.

Commenting upon his war tactics, Bhai Sohan Singh writes: "In military tactics he was the genius of his times. He fought in an open field, when he considered his strength sufficient enough for an open encounter, otherwise he took shelter in a fort or shifted to the mountains. But, personally, he was so fearless that he always went forward amidst showers of shots and shells, never feeling in the least that his life was in danger."⁴⁸

In his struggle against the Mughal rulers, Banda Singh observed another principle of war—no hostilities be commenced without trying the peaceful methods or without sending an ultimatum to the enemy. He had the principle of sending a messenger to his enemy, calling upon him to submit. On the latter's refusal to do so, he launched an attack on him.⁴⁹ Thus, the success of the Sikhs under Banda Singh was chiefly due to their unhesitating dash and courage and strategy and tactics of which he, in his short career, never lost sight of. Banda Singh's leadership and his great successes proved a boon to the cause of Sikhism. It gave Sikhism a prestige and power which had never yet been associated with it. Those who had never heard the names of the Gurus were impressed by the victories of Banda Singh and joined his ranks in thousands.⁵⁰ Even the new entrants in his company were so overwhelmed by his qualities that they smilingly sacrificed everything including their lives as did Gulaboo⁵¹ to save Banda Singh Bahadur's life during the siege of Sadhaura and Lohgarh by Bahadur Shah in 1710 A.D. This sacrifice, like

that of thousands and thousands of others executed by the Mughals, speaks of the influence of Banda Singh's exemplary leadership and lofty character.

The key to the success of Banda Singh's war tactics lay in cool planning, fearless moves, and aggressive strategy adopted by him against the soft and easy going leadership of the Mughal army. In addition to the guerilla type of warfare, called in Punjabi *Dhai Phatt* (two and a half strokes), Banda Singh's war tactics included features like surprise, mobility, concentration, economy of force, and security. His movements were like a storm and their very swiftness constituted the major element of surprise.⁵² Banda Singh manoeuvred his offensive with a well-planned strategy which was based on speed and mobility. What he lacked in sinews of war, he made up by swift movements. Not unoften, his adversaries were struck down by his dashing charges even before they were aware of the danger facing them.⁵³

Thus, Banda Singh's grand successes at Kaithal, Samana, Sadhaura, Sarhind, Saharanpur, Behat, Jalalabad and many other places speak volumes of his ability. He moved from one direction to another like a lightning. He was not dismayed by a reverse. He reorganised his forces as soon as he lost a battle. He possessed a wonderful capacity to face adverse situations. Many a time, he was found cutting through the enemy lines cleverly when he fell short of manpower or provisions, except at Gurdas Nangal where he surrendered instead. On this issue even a difference of opinion had occurred between Binod Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur, and ultimately Binod Singh left the *Ahatta*. He rode out of the enclosure and with sword in hand he cut through the besiegers all alone and was off in an instant. Thus, one thing is very surprising that when cutting through the enemy lines was good Sikh war tactic in emergencies, why was it abandoned at Gurdas Nangal? Why was not Baba Binod Singh's advice heeded? Surprisingly, the number of Sikh soldiers left were very small and the arms and ammunition which fell into the enemy hands, hardly justified the action of Banda Singh—not to leave the *haveli*. Dr. Ganda Singh writes: "Apparently the difference of opinion arose in a council of war over the proposal of evacuating the enclosure and following their old tactics of cutting through the enemy lines for a place of safety. Banda Singh, it seems, was not in favour of it, for reasons best known to him." So Dr. Ganda Singh's reason is not very convincing and there is a need for further research on the issue. But this issue does not find favour in the

contemporary sources. Some hypothesis can be developed using later sources in favour or against Banda Singh's decision.

The ten Gurus enunciated principles and Guru Gobind Singh had set the seal of his sanction on the use of sword if the cause of justice and righteousness could not be otherwise vindicated. It must also be remembered that ideas are the essential basis for action. But behind ideas there must be men with the character and discipline to translate them into results. No one can be true to his mission or creed if he seeks satisfaction from mere brave ideas and in criticism of others who do not argue with him. That is the way of facile intellectual opportunism. Every achievement requires character and discipline and united action and readiness to sacrifice the individual self for the larger cause. Banda Singh removed the fear from the hearts of the downtrodden and gave them heart to strike against their oppressors. The following incident goes on to depict how much Banda Singh dared to transform the psychology of a sullen and terrified people. When a deputation of peasants called on him at Sadhaura, complaining against the tyrannies of Muslim *Zamindars*, he asked his bodyguard to shoot the complainants. When questioned respectfully as to how the aggrieved deserved such a treatment, he answered: "You are so many and your oppressors so few. Is it not a shame that instead of dispossessing them, you should make a grievance of your own helplessness?" The complainants did as they were bidden to.⁵⁵ And the examples of this type multiplied when the news spread like a wild fire in the villages of Punjab. Banda Singh is remembered with great honour and full respect not only by the Sikhs but also by all lovers of humanity and socio-economic and political justice. He was a patriot par excellence, a devout Sikh, and an ardent freedom-fighter. In the words of Ganda Singh: "Next to the Guru, Banda Singh was the first person to place before the Sikhs a practical demonstration of staunch nationalism and to teach them to sacrifice themselves smilingly at the altar of the *Khalsa*."

The secret of his success, writes Dr. Ganda Singh, lay in his indomitable courage and unsurpassable activity, coupled with the invincible spirit and dogged tenacity of the Sikhs, which fully supplemented his meagre resources. These were, of course, backed by that strength and consistency which religious zeal alone could supply and which purity of motives and disinterested patriotism could only nourish. Even when reduced to extreme frustration, no sorrow and no disappointment could weigh him down, and he was always in *Chardhian Kalan* (an exalted spirit), as a Sikh would put it.⁵⁶

Banda Singh Bahadur took the leadership of the *Khalsa* at a time when India was passing through a series of political convulsions after the death of Aurangzeb. In fact, the eighteenth century was a period of turmoil, struggle and serious conflicts in the history of India. In its first two decades, several wars of successions were fought between the Mughal princes, leading to a deplorable state of affairs in the empire. During this period the centrifugal forces that had been kept under control so far, intensified their attempts to end the strong, unified but oppressive Mughal administration. Under the wave of regeneration and reaction, the *Jats* around Delhi, Agra, the Marathas in Maharashtra, and the Rajputs in Rajasthan revolted with added vigour and staked their claims for sovereignty in their respective regions and to play an important role in the ever-crumbling Mughal empire. So far as the Sikhs were concerned, they had made their presence felt earlier also, but it was Banda Singh Bahadur who turned their slowly germinating desire of attaining sovereignty to reality by capturing the major chunks of territory between the Sutlej and the Yamuna. Thus Banda Singh was able to establish a Sikh state, though for a short period of time.

The most difficult and risky adventure to establish Sikh sovereignty to which Banda Singh had committed himself heart and soul, could only be successfully carried out had either the Mughal empire been extremely so weak or had he received close cooperation of all the sections of society of Punjab, including the neighbouring hill rulers. In this connection, Dr. Ganda Singh writes: "If he failed in his temporal achievement of maintaining the principality that he had carved out at the commencement of warlike career, it is because the Great Mughal was yet too strong for him with the inexhaustible temporal resources of the then greatest empire of the world at his disposal. Whether at Sadhaura, or at Gurdas Nangal, it was the overwhelming number and the extremes of hunger, want of food and fodder, that reduced him. About the implements and ammunition of war, the less said the better. Not only this, the *Khalsa* had to stand the brunt of the struggle single-handed. Not even a single prominent ruler from amongst the Hindus came out to render them any help whatever. On the other hand, leading Hindu chiefs like Raja Chhatarsal Bundela, Chauraman Jat, Gopal Singh Bhadauriya, Udet Singh Bundela, Badan Singh Bundela, Bachan Singh Kachhwaha, the Rajas of the Shiwalik hills and others were all arrayed against them."⁵⁷

In the beginning of this movement, victories and dazzling successes were facilitated by the combined efforts of Banda Singh Bahadur and his

followers who had rallied after centuries of subjection to fight against their oppressors and to conquer. Banda Singh received help and support of almost all sections of society including the ruling elite such as big landlords, *Zamindars*, merchants, and even some rulers of the hill states of Punjab. As the imperial government took severe steps against the rebels and the revolt continued for longer time than expected, the merchants' and trading community's interests began to suffer and they changed their loyalty. Now they, including the *Khatris* in government service, big landlords and rulers of the hill states, began to extend full cooperation to the imperial forces in their efforts to tame Banda Singh and his associates. But, throughout the course of this struggle he derived strength from the toiling downtrodden and peasants, irrespective of their religious affiliation. But these people were not trained soldiers in regular warfare. As compared to the Mughal army, "his force was never superior to them numerically, nor had it the munition of war in plenty. Where the Mughal forces were armed with *zamburaks*, *rathkalas* and light and heavy guns, the Sikhs had spears, swords, *Samjangee*, and so on". Thus, with a small quantity of munitions and small number of men, it was difficult for Banda Singh and his comrades to continue the struggle. Commenting on the failure of the movement, Dr. Indu Banga says: "In spite of his being a competent strategist and a shrewd tactician, Banda Singh Bahadur proved unsuccessful in his bid against the imperial government. His failure was not due to any flaw in his generalship, but the other factors such as shortage of resources, the numerical disadvantage, organisational defects of the Sikhs, superiority of the Mughals in manpower and war material, defective army organisation under Banda Singh, and the gradual alienation of upper classes from his cause."⁵⁸

The Royal Mughal Court journal (*Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Ma'ulla*) contains several entries which help us discern the attitude of different segments of the society towards the cause being espoused by him. An analysis of the news reports makes it clear that the *Zamindars* (chiefs) beyond the territory of Punjab did not cooperate with Banda Singh, notwithstanding their own disputes with the Mughal authorities in their respective areas. The *Zamindars* of Saharanpur actively supported the imperial forces in their effort to drive the Sikhs out of Yamuna-Ganga Doab. The Rajputs, the *Gujjar* and with some possible exceptions the Afghan *Zamindars* (chiefs) of the Sikh strongholds consistently supported the Mughal campaigns against Banda Singh. Isa Khan, a Mein Rajput *Zamindar* of Bist *Jullundur*, was appointed Deputy *Faujdar* of the Doab on account of his services to the Mughals against the Sikhs. The Khweshgi

Afghans of Kasur were, likewise, honoured. The Afghans not only fought against Banda Singh but also served as propagandists of the Mughals trying to enlist the Muslim *Zamindars* and masses in the *Jehad* against non-Muslims. It was not surprising that the wrath of the Sikhs in some cases was directed particularly against the Afghans.⁵⁹

Banda Singh had struggled hard to inspire his men to fight against the Mughal tyranny, but, in the end, he failed. Success is never a good measure to judge the greatness of a man. Greatness lies in the struggle. Those who fight for principles never measure the chances of success or failure in the worldly manner. The career of Banda Singh had greater promise in it than what was effected, but it was soon cut short. Externally, he may not appear to have succeeded in the emancipation of his people, but like Shivaji and Maharaja Suraj Mal and Guru Gobind Singh, he ignited the fire of independence in his region which, "though smothered for a time could not be extinguished". Though independence came to Punjab much later, it was Banda Singh Bahadur who first taught the Punjabis to fight, conquer and establish their independent rule in Punjab after centuries of subjection. It was because of the exploits of Banda Singh that "a will was created in the ordinary masses of the Punjab to resist tyranny and to live and die for a national cause". And it was the result of this will that the Hindus and the Sikhs together drove out the Afghans and the Mughals in 1763-64 A.D. out of their homeland and thus achieved freedom which they had come to regard as their birth right.

Though Banda Singh met with a tragic end, and for a few years after his death the Sikhs were hunted out, he occupies a very high place in the history of Punjab. Guru Gobind Singh's mission to be served through Banda Singh cannot be said to have failed. In this connection, Payne writes: "The mission of Guru Gobind Singh had not failed. Scattered and disorganised though they (Sikhs) were without a leader (after Banda Singh), without a square of land they could call their own, the Sikhs were nearer to nationality at this time than they had ever been. Hardship and persecution had served only to strengthen their attachment to their faith and to draw them into yet closer unity. They now regarded themselves as distinct people. They believed in their destiny, as foretold by Guru Gobind Singh, and the one determination from which they never swerved was to struggle unceasingly for the triumph of the *Khalsa*."⁶⁰

According to Ganda Singh, Banda Singh was the first man to deal a

severe blow to the intolerant rule of the Mughals in Punjab and to turn the first sod in the conquest of that province by the Sikhs. Although it was forty years after his death that the capital of Lahore was occupied by the *Khalsa*, and a regular Sikh Badshahat was declared with Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as *Padshah*, it was Banda Singh Bahadur who laid the foundation of the Sikh empire in 1710 A.D.⁶¹ Paying his tribute to Banda Singh, the author of *Banda the Brave* writes: "Banda Singh died like a true and gallant warrior and had before his death most admirably accomplished the noble task the tenth Guru had entrusted him with."⁶² I would like to sum up with the memorable words of Dr. Ganda Singh: "His (Banda Singh) name shall ever remain writ large on the roll of immortality for his selfless sacrifices in the sacred cause of persecuted humanity and for his martyrdom with unflinching devotion to God and the Guru."⁶³

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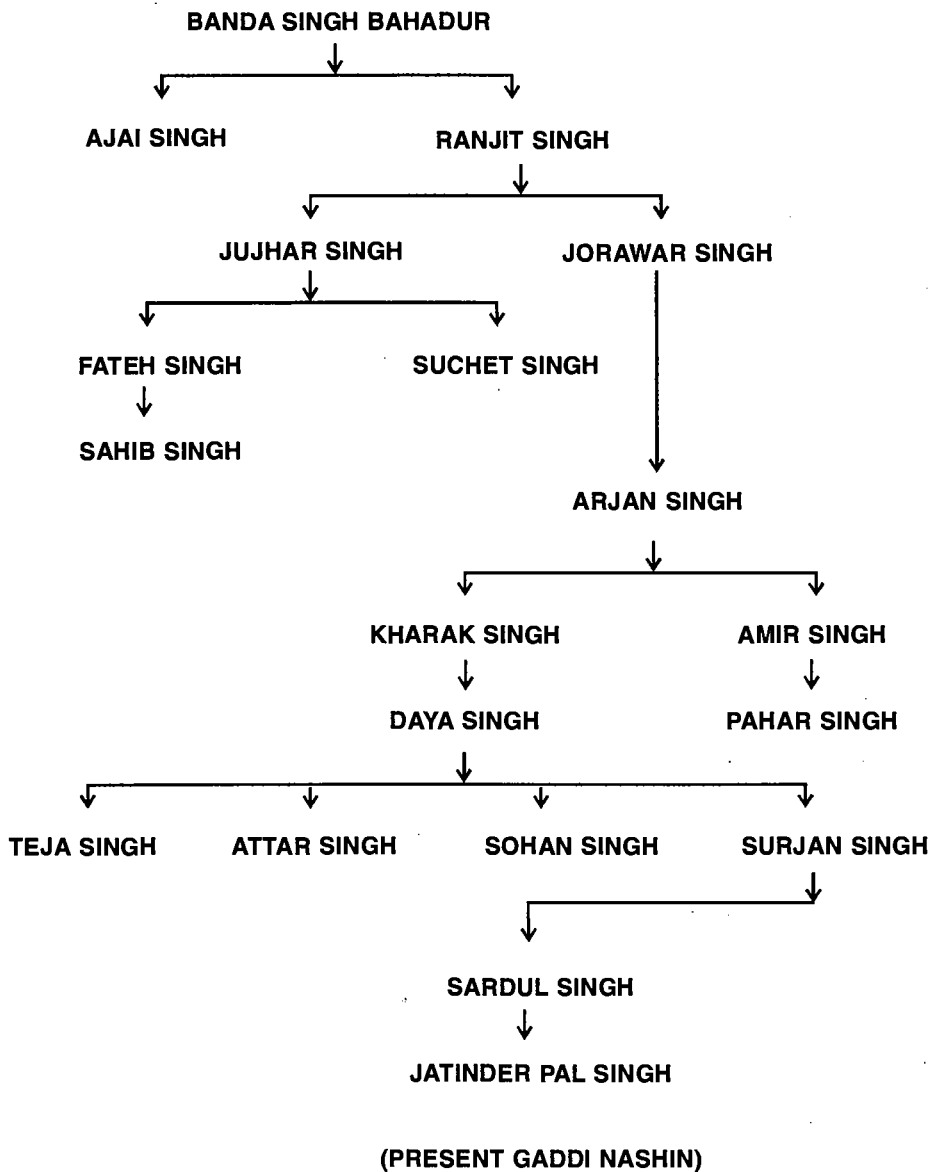
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45. Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
46. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

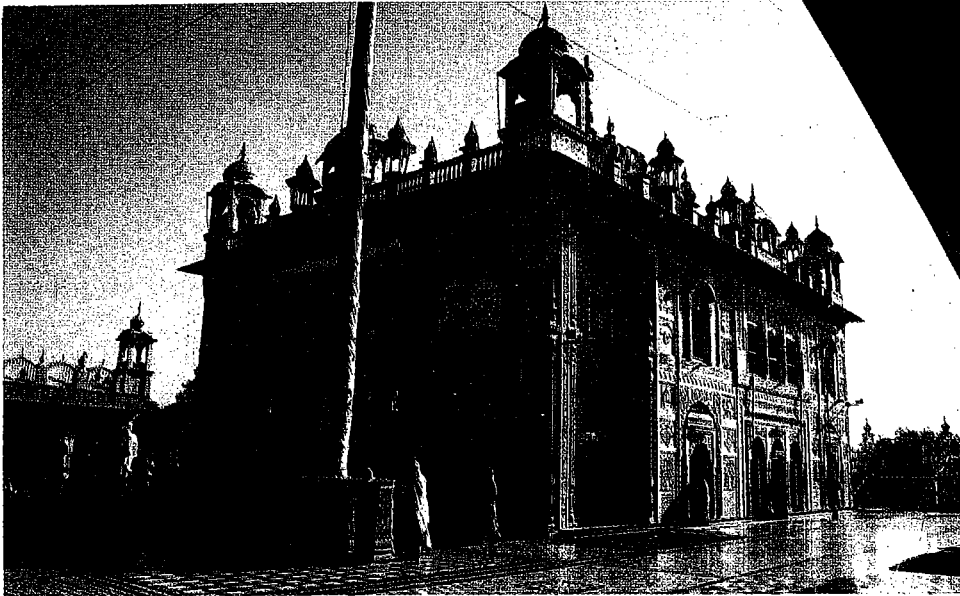
47. Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
48. Sohan Singh, *Banda the Brave*, p. 151.
49. This can be corroborated from the writings of Karam Singh, historian.
50. G.C. Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
51. According to Khafi Khan, Gulaboo was a tobacco dealer in the Mughal army that invaded Lohgarh under Bahadur Shah.
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54. Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 172. He quoted Sarup Chand, *Mahma Prakash*, Karam Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 126-77. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
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APPENDIX

Family Tree of Banda Singh Bahadur







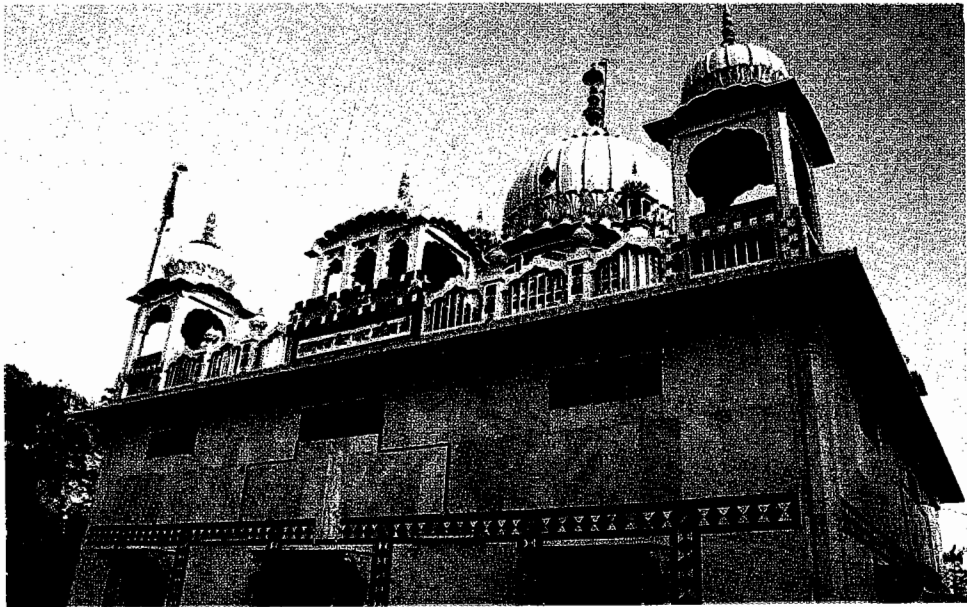
1. The Holy Takht Hazur Sahib, Nanded
(During day time).



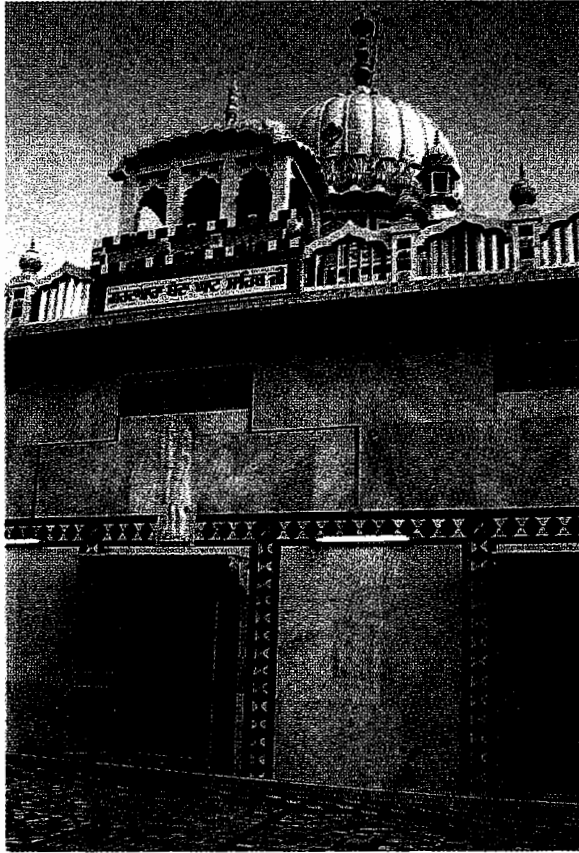
2. The Holy Takht Hazur Sahib, Nanded
(During night time).



3. Gurudwara Banda Ghat, Nanded.



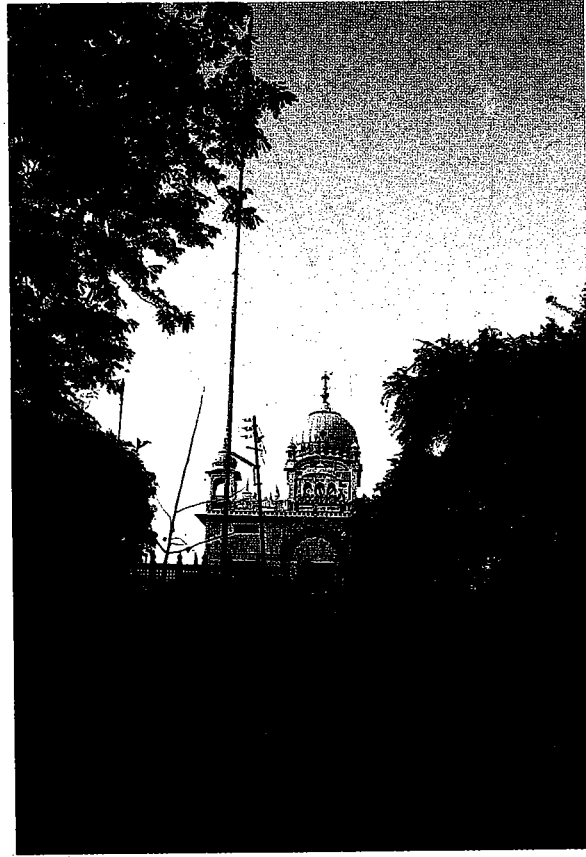
4. Facade, Gurudwara Banda Ghat, Nanded.



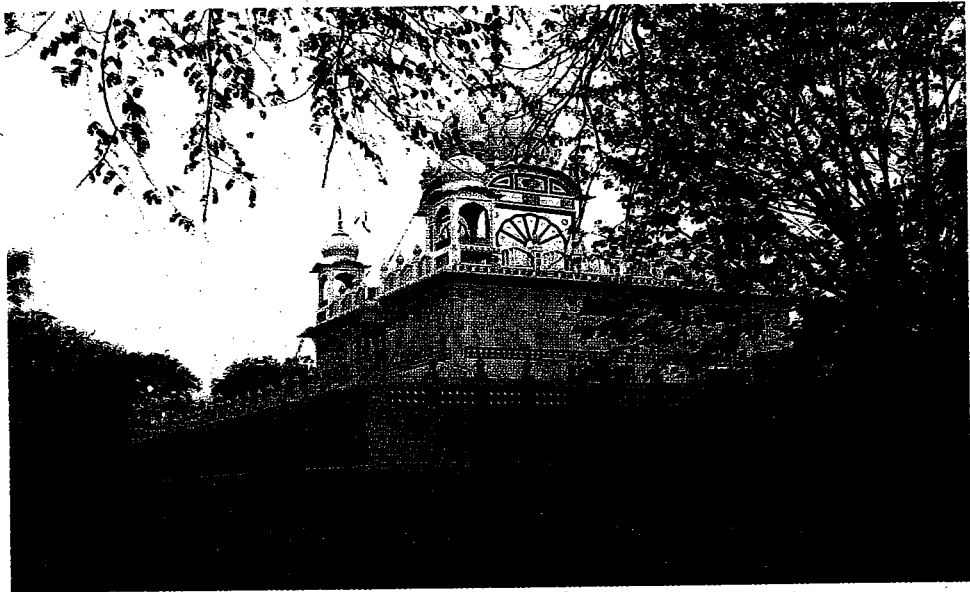
5. Central Door or entrance to the Gurudwara Banda Ghat, Nanded.



6. Gurudwara Banda Ghat, Nanded from another angle.



7. A distant view, Gurudwara Banda Ghat, Nanded.



8. Backside of Gurudwara Banda Ghat, Nanded.



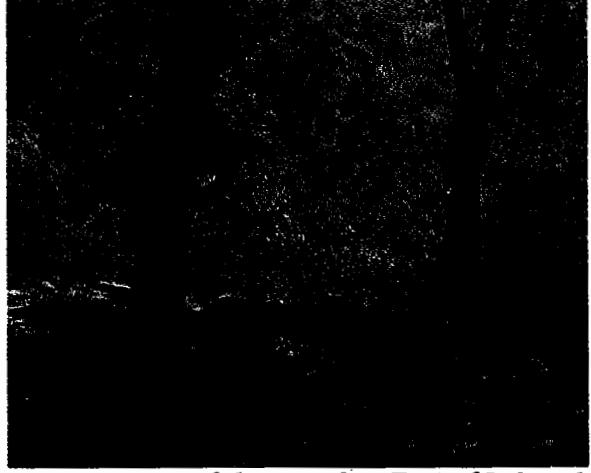
10. A way to the Fort of Lohgarh.



12. Morcha No. I, Fort of Lohgarh.



14. The author and Nihang Singh of the Gurudwara, coming down from the Fort of Lohgarh.



16. *Remnants of the Morcha, Fort of Lohgarh.*



18. Morcha No. 1, Fort of Lohgarh.



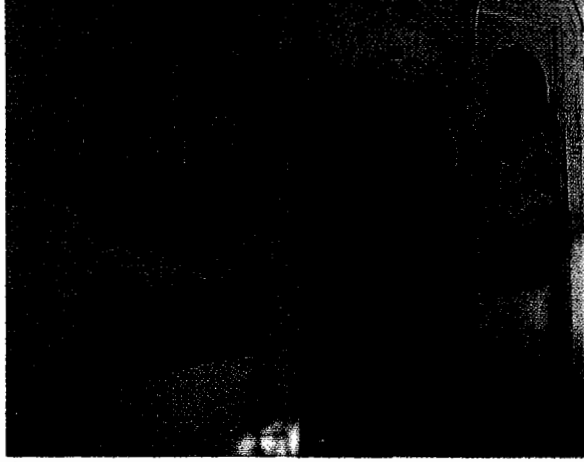
20. Late Dr. Ganda Singh (Historian) and his team of surveyors including Late Principal Gurcharan Singh and Dr. Mohinder Singh studying the foundation of Lohgarh Fort in 1969 A.D.



22. Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, Reasi (J & K).



24. Canopy of Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, Reasi (J & K).



26. Painting of Guru Gobind Singh and his disciples on one of the walls of Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, Reasi (J & K).

of Dera Sahib, Reasi
(J & K).



30. Beri tree in the
courtyard of Dera Sahib,
where Banda Singh
Bahadur used to meditate
on Nam-Simran.

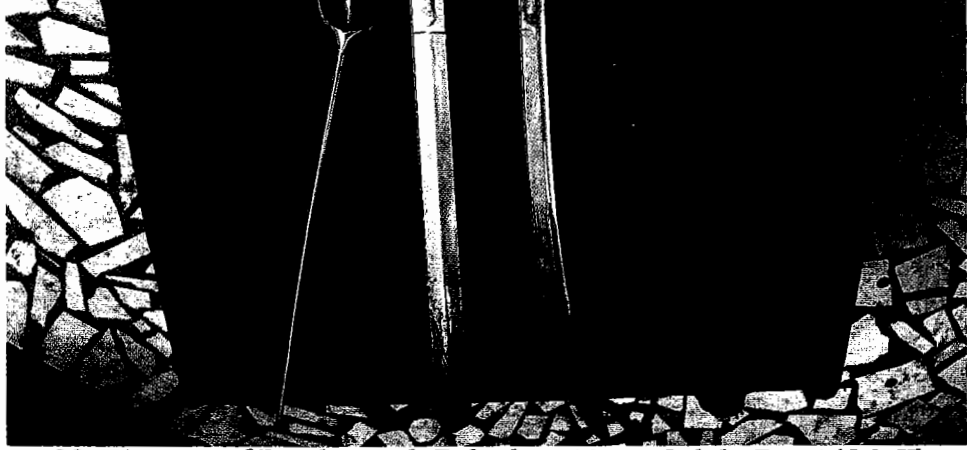




32. Baba Jatinder Pal
Singh (*Gaddi Nashin*) in
front of the *Samadhi* of
Baba Ranjit Singh, Dera
Sahib,
Reasi (J & K).



34. Mughal Paintings on the inner walls of Bangla Sahib or *Samadhi* .
Baba Ranjit Singh, Dera Sahib, Reasi (J & K).



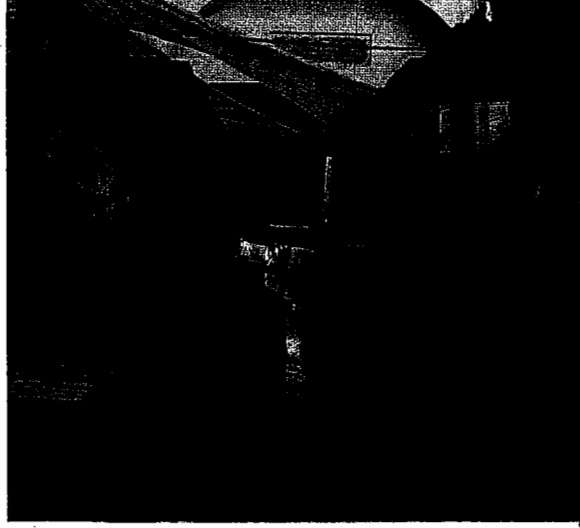
36. Weapons of Banda Singh Bahadur at Dera Sahib, Reasi (J & K)
(1) *Gurj*, (2) *Sri Sahib*, (3) *Khanda*, (4) *Kirch*.

38. Baba Sardul Singh, 9th
Gaddi Nashin, Dera Banda
Singh Bahadur,
Reasi (J & K).



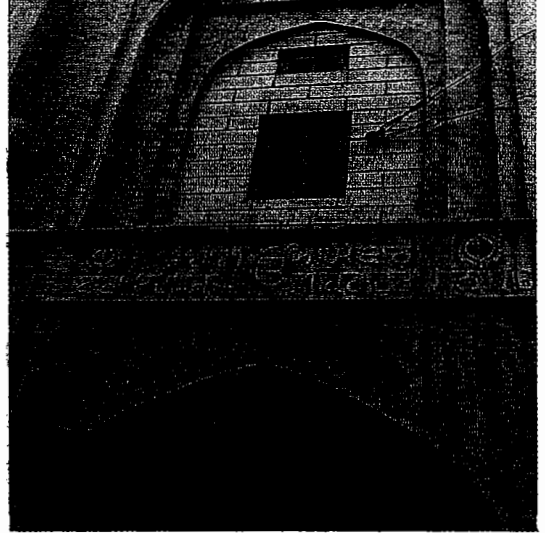


40. Gurudwara, *Haveli* Bhai Duni Chand, Langar Hall and *Sarovar* at Gurdas Nangal.

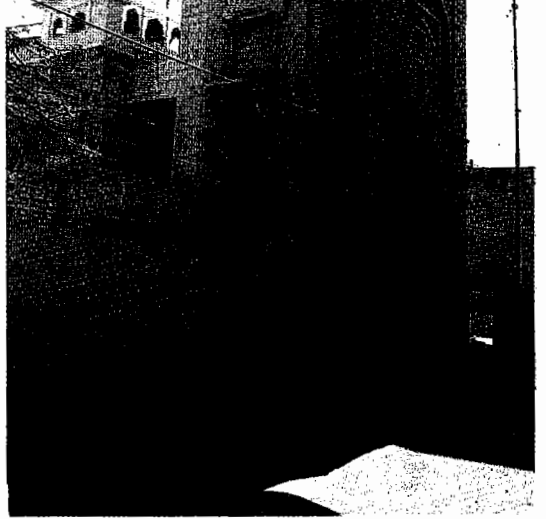


42. Entrance gate to the
Dargah Khawaja Qutab-ud-
Din Bakhtiyar Kaki,
Mehrauli, Delhi.

44. Facade of the
Gurudwara 'Shaheedi
Asthan', Mehrauli, Delhi.



46. A view of the old and
new Gurudwara *Shaheedi*
Asthan Banda Singh
Bahadur, Mehrauli, Delhi.



48. New Gurudwara
Shaheedi Asthan, Banda
Singh Bahadur and its
Bhaiji, Mehrauli, Delhi.



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